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RECONSTRUCTION IN THEOLOGY

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RECONSTRUCTION IN THEOLOGY

BY

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PREFACE

A NEW constructive period in theology, it may well be believed, is at hand. This book has been written with the earnest desire and hope that it may contribute something toward the forwarding of a movement already going on — a really spiritual reconstruction of theology in terms that should bring it home to our own day. The book aims first, to show that such a reconstruction is needed and demanded, because of the changed intellectual, moral, and spiritual world in which we live; and then, to characterize briefly, but sufficiently, this new world of our day; and finally, to indicate the influence which these convictions of our time ought to have upon theological conception and statement, especially in bringing us to a restatement of theology in terms of personal relation.

The intention has been, not to make a

large book, but rather a book as brief as was consistent with a clear and adequate treatment of the points discussed. Many points it has seemed possible to discuss quite briefly, because, although important, their bearing when once seen would hardly be disputed. Other questions could not be so treated. The influence of modern science upon theology, including the question of miracle and of the special bearing of evolution, and the influence of the historical and literary criticism of the Bible have been most fully discussed. The latter question, involving that of the higher criticism of the Old Testament, is, at present, so difficult a one for the great body of the church, that it has seemed necessary to treat it with peculiar fulness, if the aim of the book was to be accomplished. For it has been a constant desire of the writer to help intelligent laymen, as well as theological students and ministers, to a more thorough and sympathetic understanding of the great convictions and scholarly movements of the day, that

they might themselves feel the need of the spiritual reconstruction of theology, which is quietly going on, and might value it at its true worth. It, at least, ought to be possible in America and Great Britain to avoid the great breach between the scholars of the church and its membership, such as confronts Germany to-day. The results for theology of the fullest facing of modern thought, in all its aspects, certainly do not seem to the writer to be revolutionary of anything that is vital to the highest Christianity, but rather to show a distinct trend toward a deeper appreciation of Christ's own point of view. That deeper appreciation, this book contends, will bring theology to cherish as its ideal a fully personal conception of religion, and a thorough and consistent statement of doctrine in terms of personal relation. If the book has any special suggestiveness for other workers in the field of theology, this, perhaps, lies chiefly in this contention and its grounds, and in some points in the discussion of miracle and of evolution.

Parts of this volume have been printed before, but nothing is here given that is not felt to have vital connection with the theme. The book is intended to be a unity. Thanks are due to *The American Journal of Theology* for kind permission to use the writer's article on "Reconstruction in Theology" (April, 1899), most of which is retained in different portions of this book; to *The Bibliotheca Sacra* for two articles (July and October, 1900), substantially republished in the last two chapters; and to *The Advance* for the article on "The Spirit Needed in Theology To-day."

HENRY CHURCHILL KING.

OBERLIN COLLEGE, January, 1901.

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RECONSTRUCTION IN THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

THE SPIRIT NEEDED IN THEOLOGY TO-DAY

"TREATISES in systematic theology," says Principal Fairbairn, "are not so common as they once were, nor are they so easy to write or to read." But if the task of those working in theology to-day is unusually difficult, there is the more reason why they should be neither needlessly discouraged nor needlessly divided. It may not be useless, therefore, to recall certain more or less obvious considerations which, if kept in mind by religious leaders and writers as well as by the church, would greatly lighten the task of theological workers and insure a better understanding, a higher courage, and a larger progress.

THE TEMPORARY TASK OF THE THEOLOGIAN

In the first place, it would help much both the theologian and his critic if there were a

clear recognition of the temporary task of any given theologian or system. The days of great theological systems are doubtless past; not because the great truths do not abide, but simply because the task is differently conceived. That has happened here which has happened in philosophy. No man who really understands himself aims to produce the final philosophy or the final theology. Workers in both these fields are coming gradually to see that they are related to one another somewhat as are workers in natural science. Theology must grow as science grows. The task is endless. Each worker may hope to contribute something to the developing system of theological truth, and he welcomes every contribution of another; but he does not hope to reach the final system.

In one respect it is even less possible for the theologian than for the scientist to regard his work as final, for it belongs to the very nature of spiritual truth that *each age must be its own interpreter* in spiritual things. Each age has its own favorite analogies and modes of conception and of statement. Truths, therefore, that are to be vital to it require re-statement in these terms, and this

re-statement is not to be deplored, but rejoiced in as an unmistakable sign of interest and life. That a generation should be content to say over again precisely as its predecessor any form of truth would mean that that truth was not a living one for them; that they did not care to translate it into living thought and language. The task of the theologian, therefore, is, indeed, to make such contribution as he may to the growing theological truth, but chiefly, probably, to make real to his own generation the great abiding truths of Christianity. As Sabatier puts it: "To satisfy the expectation and the quest of spirits at *the very moment* living and troubled, to give them the means of justifying to themselves their faith and their hope . . . behold the principal merit and supreme praise of every genuine theology."[1] In this case, the task of the theologian is plainly temporary. He knows that in the nature of the case his statement cannot remain a final one, and, so far as he is to contribute to the growing theological truth, his task is limited. But if the task is more modest he can attack it with better understanding and more courage.

[1] Quoted by Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 23.

THE NEED OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE AGE

But if it is the chief task of the theologian to make real to his own generation the abiding truths of Christianity, he must have as a prime equipment for his work a sympathetic knowledge of his age. It is not enough that he should know it—he must know it sympathetically. It is a considerable part of the task of the following pages to help to just this needed sympathetic knowledge of our own age. Every teacher knows that there are two ways of answering the questions of a pupil; one way is simply to attack the position of the pupil, to make points against it, to turn the position into ridicule. It is not difficult with superior knowledge to close his mouth. But all this may be done and his real difficulties remain quite unrelieved. He cannot repel your attack, but he is still inwardly not convinced. The other way is to take the point of view of the pupil, to feel his difficulty, to endeavor to meet just that difficulty as you would reason with yourself in that condition, or better still, as you did reason with yourself when you were in his state of mind. It is worse than useless simply to bombard our age. No man can

greatly help it who is not willing to take the time and pains to feel its difficulties—sympathetically to understand it. When the task of theology is so conceived, each worker is more able to find in every other, not a system that excludes his own, but suggestions that may help him to make his own presentation more perfectly adapted, and therefore more convincing, to the thought of the age. The great aims are here the same. The laborers ought to be able more truly to supplement one another.

THE VALUE OF THE GREAT CREEDS

In this desire to meet sympathetically one's own age, however, it is possible to react unduly and mistakenly against the older statements of the church. To make real to his own age the great truths of Christianity requires that the theologian should have the broadest conception of what those truths are. Not less earnestly, therefore, than he studies his age, will he study the ages, and value the great creeds of the church. He seeks thus, for the sake of his age, to correct the inevitable limitations both of the individual and of the age. He seeks to enlarge his own

view by sharing the views of the great minds of the Christian centuries. He is certain that back of every statement for which the church at any time has contended strenuously—even those which seem to him most perverse in their putting—lies some real truth of Christian life and experience. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. And it is the business of the theologian here to discern the treasure, to preserve it in his own statement, to reveal it, and to hand it on. Even if he could reach independently a better statement, this in itself would not be enough. It is a distinct loss in the work of the theologian himself that he should be so out of sympathy with the church of the past, as to lose the sense of the continuity and community of the Christian generations. And, moreover, the new sense of reality of the Christian truths which he would bring to his generation loses much of its persuasiveness and convincing power, if it seems to be only his discovery, and to be out of harmony with the trend of the Christian thought of the past. It is easy here to make one's protest against the old creeds so strong as seriously to weaken the hold of all Christian truth. An isolated Christian confession is a self-contradiction.

FRANK RECOGNITION OF DIFFICULTIES

It would greatly help to a genuine progress in theology, moreover, if there were on all sides a franker recognition of difficulties. Socrates thought that his superior wisdom consisted in a knowledge of his ignorance. The professor of theology is not a professor of omniscience. He does not expect to pack away in any single neat formula the complexity of life and its constant paradoxes. The psychological and ethical problems are less simple for him than they were for his predecessor. We have less knowledge than we thought concerning many of the refinements of theological speculation. We need less than we thought. A Christian revelation, we should not forget, does not aim to satisfy our curiosity on all possible points. There are many questions of interest and importance to which Christ makes no answer. We reach an answer, that we believe Christian, to these questions only by somewhat uncertain inference. Yet we are bound to work out, for our own mental peace, "a Christian view of God and the world;" but in this necessary task it were well that we should be careful both not to be wise above

that which is written, and to make a sharp separation between our own added speculations and the direct teachings of Christ. And the differences in the added speculations should not be magnified into fundamental differences. These difficulties exist for all, of all schools. We cannot evade them, we cannot wholly solve them — and we may well welcome all earnest Christian attempts at solution.

In particular it is well to recognize the existence of *the paradoxes* in the great church creeds. As in the perennial problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom, the creed is often content with simply affirming both sides of a great truth, without showing how the two can be brought together. The presence of these paradoxes in the creeds is quite justified, for our well-founded convictions must often outrun our power of complete intellectual expression of them. We are more than intellect. But the theologian nevertheless cannot be content to leave them simply as paradoxes. He must do his best to think the relation out, to bring the two into a real unity, and in this difficult task, he may well welcome assistance. Here is room again for intelligent, coöperative labor.

HELPS TO MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

In a coöperative working out of these paradoxes and difficulties, in preserving and revealing the treasures of the past, and in meeting our own age with the best-adapted statement of Christian truth, much depends upon religious leaders and thinkers understanding one another. In the nature of the case this clear understanding is much more difficult in theology than in natural science. It is the more necessary for fruitful coöperation, therefore, that all avoidable sources of misunderstanding be eliminated. A few suggestions, only, are possible here.

In the first place, it would help to patience and mutual understanding, if it could be recognized that differences in statement often point only to *differences in temperament*. The seeming conservative, for example, who chooses the old form of statement, may nevertheless really have thought its whole meaning and be able to translate it into the thought of his time. The seeming radical, who prefers the fresh statement and never uses the old form, may nevertheless keep the old meaning. The theoretical temperament cares chiefly in his theological thinking for a

consistent, all-inclusive, intellectual formulation, and is ready to believe the whole structure endangered by the loss of its least part; yet practically he may recognize the great differences. The practical temperament in his theologizing thinks mainly of the bearing of the truth on life, and is not always careful as to complete theoretical consistency; but his real beliefs may still be much sounder than they logically ought to be.

There is also special need in theological discussion of the recognition of the *limitations of language.* One is suddenly surprised to find that language that seems perfectly clear to him, as he uses it, and is well understood by those moving in his circle of ideas, is nevertheless capable of an honest but much different interpretation on the part of a critic. The history of theology is full of these misinterpretations. To take a single illustration: much (not all) of the recent criticism in both England and America of the Ritschlian school gets its point from misinterpretation.

This danger of misinterpretation is much increased from the psychological tendency of us all to what Professor James calls "*old-fogyism.*" "Every new experience must be disposed of under some old head. Hardly

any of us can make new heads easily when fresh experiences come." It is consequently easier to place an old label on any new conception in theology than it is really to put one's self at the new point of view and think the new conception through. It is so much easier, for example, to dub a thoughtful but unfamiliar statement of some doctrine Unitarianism than it is to take the trouble to see what the statement really means. There would be not only less hasty misjudgment, but also more valuable assistance, if we were really at pains to understand one another, and so to enrich our stock of conceptions.

It would help to mutual understanding and intelligent coöperation, moreover, if we could hold to two further sharp *distinctions*. First, we would do well to distinguish between a denial of a doctrine now stated in an analogy, and an earnest, though perhaps inadequate, attempt to master the analogy and to state, as exactly as language will allow, its real meaning. And it would prove a real safeguard to genuine Christian thinking today if we made a sharper distinction, also, between speculative thinkers who are quite willing to keep the old theological phrases, but mean something very different by them

from what the Christian view can allow (as is true, for example, of several Neo-Hegelian writers), and those truly Christian thinkers who honestly reject old forms of statement because they believe them inadequate to express the truth they were meant to contain. There is a singular and widespread disposition to-day to treat the former as orthodox and the latter as heterodox.

HOW TRUTH COMES TO BE

Finally, as to the real and vital differences between Christian thinkers, which still remain after the completest mutual understanding, it would be a help to every worker in theology if it were more widely recognized how truth comes to be. In our modern vision of the many-sidedness of truth and of the necessary partialness of one's own view, there is danger of "over-sophistication,"—that we shall lose all real convictions and paralyze every earnest striving for the truth. One of the greatest dangers of the educated man is to be found in his ability to defend more or less successfully any position. He finds it easy, therefore, as Fichte puts it, to "go on subtilizing until he loses all power of recog-

nizing truth," and readily persuades himself either that what he wants is true, or that all convictions are about equally justified. Yet indifferentism is neither breadth nor true tolerance, but the death of all advance in the truth; and the man who is able to see a matter from many points of view, while he resists any return to a spirit of intolerance, must, then, still urge with himself that truth comes, not through the silence of all, but by each declaring honestly and earnestly his best. In no other way can progress in the truth be brought about. It is, therefore, a direct interest of the church to encourage, not to deprecate, honest thoughtful expression by its thinkers, though not forthwith to adopt every latest statement. Only out of the conflict of earnest and honest thinking can the highest Christian truth emerge. Each thinker, therefore, recognizes that his own view must be partial, but he puts it forth with all energy and earnestness, for it is the truth for which it is given him to stand. He expects its partialness to be corrected by conflict with the thought of other equally earnest and honest thinkers. It is exactly this untrammeled field for the strenuous struggle for existence that truth covets.

Truth has nothing to fear and everything to hope from such a struggle. This means that even in the field of their manifest differences, the aim of all honest thinkers is still the same: not their truth, but truth—the resulting truth. With this consciousness, it ought not to be difficult to keep an open mind toward all fellow-workers.

RECOGNITION OF THE NEED OF RECONSTRUCTION IN THEOLOGY

CHAPTER I

THE EVIDENCE OF THE FEELING OF THE NEED OF RECONSTRUCTION

RECONSTRUCTION in any living thing is constant, but it may still have its marked stages. To affirm, therefore, that there is need of reconstruction in theology is not at all to overlook the fact that such reconstruction has been constantly going on, that there have been many formulations by individual men more or less satisfactory: but it is simply to say that there is much to indicate that we have reached a point where our great inherited historical statements are quite generally felt to be inadequate, and where conditions, long at work, are so culminating and combining as to give promise of a somewhat marked stage in the development of theology.

Nor does the recognition of the need of

reconstruction in Christian theology reflect a feeling of dissatisfaction with the Christian *religion*. On the contrary, the need of reconstruction is perhaps felt most strongly by those who have themselves gained a new sense of the absoluteness of the Christian religion, and call the old theological statements in question, because these statements make this absoluteness so little manifest. Obviously here the dissatisfaction is not with the Christian religion, but with our intellectual expression of its meaning. And it ought not to surprise or trouble us that this intellectual expression must change from time to time with other intellectual changes.

I. THE EVIDENCE ITSELF

There is abundant evidence that the need of reconstruction in theology is widely recognized. In his recent *History of Christian Doctrine*, speaking simply as a historian, Professor Fisher says:[1] "It is plain to keen observers that, in the later days, both within and without what may be called the pale of Calvinism, there is a certain relaxing of confidence in the previously accepted solutions

[1] Page 551.

of some of the gravest theological problems. This appears among many whose attachment to the core of the essential truths formulated in the past does not wane, whose substantial orthodoxy, as well as piety, is not often, if it be at all, questioned, and who have no sympathy with agnosticism, in the technical sense of the word."

In illustration of this statement, Professor Fisher quotes from two late revered religious leaders in England, Dean Church and Dr. R. W. Dale. Dr. Dale's statement is explicit. The method of the Reformers, he says, "was still powerfully influenced by the decaying scholasticism. There were other causes which gave to their work a provisional character. Indeed all work of this kind is necessarily but for a time; it has to be done over again whenever any great changes have taken place in the intellectual condition of Christendom. Such changes have plainly been going on very rapidly during the last three hundred years. . . . If the intellectual revolution is approaching its term, the process of reconstructing our theological systems will soon have to be gone through again."

To the same import, Beyschlag, the New

Testament theologian, speaks of "our traditional church and doctrinal systems, concerning the insufficiency of which our age, with all its other differences, is pretty unanimous;" and adds, "my conviction . . . is that a renovated expression of our church doctrine is one of the most urgent duties of the time."[1]

Systematic theologians themselves are certainly not blind to this trend of the times. Dr. D. W. Simon intends to give the testimony of a conservative when he says: "We do not deny, nay, we are quite aware—all theologians worthy of the name are aware—that the efforts hitherto put forth to build up such a science of systematic theology or, as it might be termed, of Christianity or of the Christian religion, have been only very partially successful."[2] From a somewhat different point of view, Fairbairn appeals to the common consciousness of theologians on this point: "We all feel the distance placed by fifty years of the most radical and penetrating critical discussions between us and the older theology, and as the distance widens the theology that then reigned grows less

[1] *New Testament Theology*, Vol. I, pp. xiii and xxi.
[2] Introduction to Stählin's *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, p. xxi.

credible because less relevant to living mind."[1] From the Ritschlian standpoint, and thinking of the religious situation in Germany, Herrmann urges that theologians "must surely feel for the thousands who have lost their hold on the gospel, because they have found that certain presuppositions have utterly vanished upon which the preaching of the Church used to be based."[2] And it is within two years that an occupant of the chair of systematic theology in one of our prominent seminaries said to me, "The old systems are not simply going; they have gone."

Careful observation is likely to confirm these varied testimonies. The way in which elaborate systems of theology, of comparatively recent date, have simply disappeared from the practical use and thought of men is one of the remarkable phenomena of our generation. Even the most conservative show the same feeling. The old theological statements are somehow felt even by them not to get home, to be some way unrelated to our present world; and so either they are repeated with increased emphasis; or this unrelatedness is laid to the growing evil of

[1] Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 296.
[2] Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 4.

the times, and refuge is taken in "the man of sin"; or, again, some of the new watchwords are caught up, without a full sense of their meaning. Perhaps Rashdall's language is not too strong: "The restatement—let us frankly say the reconstruction—of Christian doctrine is the great intellectual task upon which the church of our day is just entering, and with which it must go on boldly if Christianity is to retain its hold on the intellect as well as the sentiment and social activities of our time."[1]

II. THE POINTS OF CRITICISM

The feeling of dissatisfaction calls in question one after another of the old statements as unhistorical, uncritical, unprotestant, unbiblical, unchristian, unreligious, or unspiritual. So Professor Burton says, as to the first points, "Theology must wait for history; history must wait for criticism; criticism must wait for interpretation; and interpretation again for criticism."[2] Of the unprotestant character of much doctrinal statement, Herrmann complains: "We preserve what is in

[1] Quoted by Garvie, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[2] E. D. Burton, *American Journal of Theology*, January, 1898.

reality Roman Catholic dogma in a somewhat modified form."[1] That our dogmatic systems are felt to be quite too unbiblical and unchristian, Beyschlag bears witness when, after affirming that he is able to "exhibit a great unison in the biblical doctrine of salvation," he nevertheless adds (in language too strong probably to give a true impression of his real position): "But, except in a very modified way, I have not any scriptural support to proffer for the traditional creed of the Church."[2] And Horton notes with surprise that, in Dr. Denney's recent *Studies in Theology*, "there is no reference to the teaching of Jesus, except when the lecturer wishes to treat of the Church and the last judgment." "It is the unhappy delusion of the Church," he says, "that it knows the teaching of Jesus;" and he expects a revolution in theology from real attention to that teaching.[3] It is felt also by many others that what Lotze calls the "cosmological" elements have quite too large a place in dogmatic systems; that, in other words, in large sections theology has ceased

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 22.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. xxi.
[3] Horton, *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 12, viii.

to be *religious* at all, or to have any direct relation to the religious life. So Harnack complained, in his lectures on *Church and Theological Movements of the Present*, that theology had become like a great palace, in only one single room of which religion sat. Even in the doctrinal statements in which a direct relation to the religious life is affirmed, the traditional formula seems to many to be utterly inadequate, in the nature of the case, because it fails even to state the problem as distinctly moral and spiritual.

The demands, then, increasingly made upon Protestant theology are: that it should take full account of historical criticism; that it should be genuinely and consistently Protestant—not in the negative but in the positive sense; that it should consequently be really biblical and Christian, in which case it would have left behind it unreligious and unspiritual doctrinal statements. From a somewhat different point of view, theology is also criticised as unscientific, and this criticism, too, must be reckoned with.

CHAPTER II

THE REASONS FOR THIS FEELING OF NEED OF RECONSTRUCTION

IF it be granted that the need of a reconstruction of theology is recognized, it is important that the reasons for this feeling of need should be seen.

I. NOT A RATIONALISTIC SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

In general it is not, it should be noted in the first place, a rationalistic spirit which calls for this reconstruction. There are, no doubt, rationalistic critics of theology; but a barren rationalism is certainly not the real motive to reconstruction felt in evangelical circles. The history of rationalism shows all too plainly that it ends in religious impoverishment and indefiniteness and in a knowledge without zeal.[1] The evangelical church knows well, with Van Dyke, that "the unveiling of the Father in Christ was, and con-

[1] *Cf.* Hyde, *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 63; Gordon, *The Christ of To-day*, p. 27.

tinued to be, and still is the Palladium of Christianity. All who have surrendered it, for whatever reason, have been dispersed and scattered. All who have defended it, in whatever method, have been held fast in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God."[1]

II. NOT THE REACTION ON THE CHURCH OF AN ANTI-RELIGIOUS AGE

Nor is the motive to reconstruction to be found in the reaction on the Church of what is called the anti-religious or anti-Christian spirit of the age. Dr. Van Dyke's characterization of our age as an "age of doubt," seems to me at best misleading, and to be poorly borne out by the evidence he himself alleges. An age should be characterized by that which distinguishes it from previous ages. And it is very hard to face the large and steady gain of evangelical church membership, and still affirm that this is distinctively an age of doubt. Dr. Van Dyke's own triumphant note of faith in Christ is not a merely individual one. It belongs in larger degree than ever before to this age, as the poems of our day, which he

[1] Van Dyke, *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, p. 110.

is able to quote, and the literature he gathers in corroboration of his own faith, abundantly show. The feeling of the need of reconstruction in theology is distinctly not due to an unusual anti-Christian or anti-religious spirit in the age as a whole.

There are two contrasted phenomena of our age, not always considered together, though they are probably closely connected. On the one hand there is *less* of *natural* religion that means much personally to men and, on the other hand, *more* of *Christian* religion as personally avowed and lived. To observers who are thinking chiefly of the class of men, often highly educated, who used to give some considerable place in their life and thought to some kind of natural religion, or rationalistic Christian religion, but who now seem to have given up any religious basis for their ethical life, it will seem, as Professor James says, that "our religious life lies more, our practical life lies less, than it used to on the perilous edge."[1] To those, however, who note the undoubted facts as to the enormous increase of avowed Christian confessors in this century, to speak of this age as particularly irreligious seems little short of absurd.

[1] *Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 579.

And yet are not the two phenomena closely connected? Men have reached in our day a kind of a parting of the ways; either they must have much more religion or much less. It is inconceivable that either class in our age could be content with the mere religious rationalism of the eighteenth century. In truth, both classes of phenomena naturally call for reconstruction in theology. On the one hand it is in part the very prevalence of genuine Christian feeling, in and out of the church, which makes it so difficult to receive the old doctrinal statements. On the other hand there are many honest, earnest, and thoughtful men who feel estranged from Christianity. We cannot ignore their difficulties, and we have reason to question the adequacy of a presentation of Christianity that turns such men away from it. Are the statements hiding Christ?

It may well be doubted whether there ever was an age in which there was so much of genuine personal thoughtfulness concerning themes essentially religious as in our own, and that makes this a religious age. But it is a realistic age. It wants reality everywhere, and is increasingly impatient of sham. But it does want and value honest convic-

tions that can give account of themselves. For every reason there is needed earnest, honest testimony in theology. A real theology, that rings true and is to carry any conviction, must be a personal confession of faith. "Set ten men," Emerson says, "to write their journal for one day, and nine of them will leave out their thought, or proper result—that is, their net experience—and lose themselves in misreporting the supposed experience of other people." The danger is certainly not less in theology.

The liability to mere repetition of the observations and opinions of others is sufficiently strong in any field of work, even in science; but in theology it is both particularly strong and particularly fatal: particularly strong, because the interests at stake in religion are felt to be so great, and men's attachment to time-honored statements so warm, that a thoughtful man must hesitate to trust his own conviction against what seems the prevailing testimony of the Church; particularly fatal, because the phenomena are phenomena of the moral and spiritual life, and there can be no hope of attaining to the truth in this sphere, except by the most absolute honesty of testimony on the part of all

investigators. There must be the deepening of the life in Christ, that one may be able to speak of the whole, and then the honest speaking out his own message—what he actually finds, not what he thinks he will be expected to find. Books of such absolutely honest testimony are exceedingly rare, but whenever found they have a value quite beyond the extent of our agreement with them. Now it is such honest testimony, translated into the tongue of the present day and spoken with conviction, that our realistic age most of all needs. It instinctively distrusts—not always fairly—the vitality of a faith that speaks a dead language. Men naturally argue that a living faith of living men would express itself in a living tongue; they value neither a dead faith nor the testimony of dead men.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEW INTELLECTUAL, MORAL, AND SPIRITUAL WORLD

In point of fact, it is exactly because the living faith of the present does find it hard to express itself fully and naturally in the doctrinal statements of the reformers, or even of the theology of fifty years ago, that recon-

struction in theology is felt to be needed and is demanded. It is not primarily a demand from without at all, but the pressure of life from within. But an honest expression of the pressure from within would meet the demand from without. The reasons then, for the feeling of the need of reconstruction in theology, are to be found in a deepening of the Christian spirit itself, and in the *influence of the new intellectual, moral, and spiritual world* in which we live, and upon which this spirit has been working. Just as the acceptance of the principle of the correlation of forces called for a rewriting of physics—a "new physics," or the theory of evolution for the rewriting of biology—a "new biology," so, in the same sense, the acceptance of certain great convictions of our own day calls for a rewriting of theology—a new theology. Not that in any of these cases the great underlying facts have changed, but our conception of them and of their relations has changed. These dominating convictions of our age form a universal permeating atmosphere, which inevitably affects in some way all schools of theology.

What makes this new atmosphere, this new world? What are the convictions in-

creasingly shared by all our generation, whose influence on theology is indubitable and inevitable? It may be worth while, at the risk of rehearsing some familiar facts, to get a clear view of precisely those convictions that make our modern life.

THE NEW WORLD

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT OF THE MODERN AGE

EVEN a cursory glance discloses many phenomena fairly peculiar to our age, and we are coming to an increasing understanding of the great undercurrents which produce these phenomena. We belong to the modern period, and to the dawn of the twentieth century. We inherit all the influences and problems of the past; and we need to discern how much this means. Historians in all fields recognize the modern period as throughout revolutionary, critical, protestant, but protestant for the sake of reconstruction. This distinguishing characteristic of the new age has been defined as "that enlightenment, destroying in order to reconstruct, which sought to break the dominion of all prejudice, and to undermine every ill-founded belief."[1]

[1] Lotze, *Microcosmus*, Vol. II, p. 286.

I. IN RELIGION

The protest began in religion, and was a protest, as Erdmann puts it, on the one hand against everything in which the church had become secularized, paganized, Judaized; on the other hand a protest "against everything in which the church had opposed itself to the rational and justifiable interests of the world."[1] Positively the protest meant, as the whole world knows, insistence, in the first place, upon justification by faith and the priesthood of all believers, and, in the second place, the recognition of the rights of property, marriage, and the State. The appeal made in support of these positions to scripture and primitive Christianity against the authority of councils and ecclesiastical tradition could end logically only in a defense of entire *freedom of conscience and freedom of investigation*. This is the only consistent Protestant position.

The great revolutionary force at work everywhere in the on-going of Christianity in all communions is Christ's own mind. Increasingly, on the whole, the spirit of Christ is permeating the consciousness of the

[1] *History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 3, 4.

church, expelling inconsistencies of all kinds, and little by little making that consciousness ever more truly Christian. The Reformation was only one stage in this perpetual purification of Christianity. Nothing is so persistently revolutionary as the facing of the supreme revelation of God and of the ideal man. The moral and spiritual changes which this seems most to have forced home upon our time are gathered in Chapter IV.

II. IN THE STATE

Revolution in the State ends in the practical universal recognition of both absolute natural right and historic legitimate right, as Lotze names them. In this recognition of the double duty of the State—on the one hand, the duty of keeping faith with the past, of preserving some living community with those gone, the conservative tendency, the recognition of historical right; on the other hand, the duty of fidelity to the interests of the present, of revolt against the "dead hand," the radical tendency, the recognition of absolute natural right—in this double recognition lie enclosed all the modern problems of sociology and social evolution.

This revolution in the State, also, so far as it concerns our theme, expresses itself in certain great moral convictions which are gaining new force in this generation. These are later named.

III. IN THE INTELLECTUAL SPHERE

In the intellectual sphere the same revolutionary and protestant spirit is to be seen.

1. *Modern philosophy* in its rebound from scholastic dogmatism begins with Descartes' "methodical doubt"—the deliberate questioning of everything that could be questioned, and early made its chief investigations in the theory of knowledge, and throughout the period this question has been prominent, if not foremost. That its great subject is man —the whole man—and neither God nor the world, means that it finds its key only in itself, and not in any external source of authority. Our own century begins with the *Critical Philosophy* of Kant that was intended by its theory of knowledge to make philosophical dogmatism forever impossible. Kant's problems were all problems of mediation, and remain essentially the present problems of philosophy, though they are much differently

conceived, since the great systems of Fichte, Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel lie between us and Kant. These problems may all be summed up in the problem of bringing into unity the mechanical and ideal views of the world. The last few years have seen the remarkable growth of the newer psychology, the increasing influence of the idea of evolution, and the accompanying historical bent of philosophy, and the hardly yet recognized complete collapse of materialism as a philosophical theory. Wundt's classical *Outlines of Physiological Psychology* was published as late as 1874, and his Leipsic psychological laboratory, the first in the world, was not established until 1879.[1] The idea of evolution became to the world a scientific reality with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Emphasis on the history of philosophy, too, naturally accompanied the awakened historical sense of the century and the Hegelian idea of a dialectic movement in the thought of the world, as well as the scientific view of evolution. But the programs of German universities of the last few years show how great is the present place given to a more strictly scientific study of the history of phi-

[1] *Cf.* Külpe, *Outlines of Psychology*, pp. 26 and 27.

losophy. This is one evidence of a more patient and inductive temper in philosophy. Even more significant is the collapse of materialism. This beginning of the end of materialism among scientific workers themselves may perhaps be said to date from Tyndall's address upon *Scientific Materialism* in 1868, powerfully seconded by Du Bois-Reymond's *Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens* in 1872, and *Die Sieben Welträthsel* in 1880. The problem is now so much more clearly seen, even from the scientific side, than it was twenty years ago, that probably no defender of philosophical materialism could be found to-day among scientists of the first rank.[1] With these changes may be mentioned, also, the striking development of the science of religion in the last forty years, and of modern sociology, which can hardly be said to be older than the early writings of Herbert Spencer.[2] The philosophical world is utterly different from that of the Reformation.

2. *In Science.*—To the modern period, too, practically belongs the very birth of natural science, in the sense of exact investigation with deliberate experiment and repeated test-

[1] *Cf.* Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 74 ff.

[2] *Cf.* Giddings, article on "Modern Sociology," *The International Monthly*, Nov., 1900.

ing. This development of modern science, it has been pointed out, has implied three things: an immensely increased respect for experience, emphasis on the universality of law, and a three-fold restriction on the part of science to experience, to a mathematical, not a speculative, development of its data, and to phenomena. That is, modern science distinctly disclaims to be either *a priori*, speculative, or ultimate.

Modern science has besides greatly affected the thought and imagination of men in its immense extension of the world in space, and the discernment of its laws through astronomy, and in a similar extension of the world in time and the discernment of its laws through both astronomy and geology.

To these influences science has added to the thought of the age a sense of the unity of the world which is fairly overpowering. Extensively, spectrum analysis has been made to testify to uniformity of materials; gravitation and magnetism to uniformity of forces. Intensively, the principle of the conservation of energy is held to prove the unity of all forces, and the theory of evolution aims to include all phenomena under the unity of one method. Practically, scientific inven-

tions have made our earth a unity, in a way not only to affect our imagination, but to change in a marked manner almost all the problems of our time. No man can conceive even superficially the changes involved in the rise of modern science, and not feel how impossible it is for men of this generation to occupy precisely the point of view of not more than fifty years ago, even in their theological statements.

3. *In Historical Criticism.*—In the field of historical criticism our characterization of the intellectual changes which have taken place must be confined to those which bear specially on our theme. "Edwin Hatch," a recent reviewer says, "rejoiced to hear 'the solemn tramp of the science of history marching in our day almost for the first time into the domain of Christian theology.'" One date is of special interest here, because in that year so many important questions were started. "The year 1835," says Pfleiderer, "marked an era in our scientific knowledge of the biblical foundations of Christianity. In it appeared David Friedrich Strauss' *Life of Jesus*, the work of Christian Ferdinand Baur on the *Pastoral Epistles*, and Wilhelm Vatke's *His-*

tory of the Religion of the Old Testament,— three works containing the germs of the researches of our own day into the Old and New Testament writings."[1] The historical sense is itself almost a product of this century (for it practically begins with Herder), and it meant real and great changes, in the first place, in *biblical interpretation*, since interpretation now seeks to give full weight to the intellectual, moral, and religious atmosphere of the time. And to this conviction the immense increase of the last fifty years in the literature of the historical criticism of the Bible bears unmistakable witness. It was inevitable that the same historical spirit should recognize differences not only between Old Testament and New Testament times, but differences as well within these periods, and differences also in the point of view of different classes and individuals in the same period. This brought into being the whole new science of *biblical theology*, in which all rejoice, but which, in any strict construction of it, is less than fifty years old.[2] To the same historical movement, coupled with literary analysis and carried

[1] *The Development of Theology*, p. 209.

[2] *Cf.* Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 32 ff.

into the individual books, belongs the so-called *higher criticism* of the Old Testament. In its recent really influential form it is scarcely more than thirty years old, since it virtually dates from Graf (1866)[1].

But far the most important result of historical criticism for theology has been what Fairbairn calls *the recovery of the historical Christ*. It is the unique and greatest service of Principal Fairbairn's epoch-making book, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, that it makes so clear the place that Christ occupies in the thought of our generation. "Our day," he says, "has also been marked by a return to the sources of a quite specific character—it has been more distinctly than any other a return to the historical Christ . . . —to him as the person who created alike the evangelists and the apostles, by whom he is described and interpreted."[2]

Let one bring together now, for a moment in thought, the intellectual changes in philosophy, in science, and in historical criticism of the last seventy years, and he must agree with John Fiske that "in their mental

[1] *Cf.* Briggs, *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, pp. 90 ff. See also Pfleiderer, *The Development of Theology*, pp. 258 ff.

[2] *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 187.

habits, in their methods of inquiry, and in the data at their command, the men of the present day who have fully kept pace with the scientific movement are separated from the men whose education ended in 1830 by an immeasurably wider gulf than has ever before divided one progressive generation of men from their predecessors."[1] If the man of to-day, therefore, is really alive to the movements of his own time, it is simply impossible that he should use most naturally and easily the language of the older generation in expressing his deepest convictions on any theme.

[1] *The Idea of God*, p. 56.

CHAPTER IV

THE CORRESPONDING MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CHANGES

SIDE by side with the revolution in religion, in the State, and in the intellectual sphere, and influenced by these, there have taken place in the modern period similar changes in the general moral and spiritual convictions. Is it possible to state with some clearness and precision, and yet with the utmost brevity and without argument, the greatest of these fundamental, moral, and spiritual convictions of our day?

I. THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONVICTIONS OF OUR TIME

From modern humanism—the special influence, most of all, of Christianity; but also of political and social evolution, of philosophy, and the newer psychology—has come a greatly heightened sense of the *value and sacredness of the individual person* in his entirety. Sensitiveness as to the personal throughout is stronger, as it ought to be,

than in any preceding period; and under it may be brought almost every other moral characteristic of our age.

From the whole spirit of the modern period, but especially from Protestantism, and the influence of philosophy and of science, has come, we may hope, finally full recognition of *freedom of conscience* and *freedom of investigation.* These principles are distinctly moral, though applied in the intellectual sphere.

The influence of natural science, moreover, has been effective in bringing into clear consciousness Christianity's latent *recognition of law, conditions, and time* in the moral and spiritual life, as truly as in any other sphere.

The idealistic trend in philosophy, so strongly asserted by Paulsen, and evidenced by the collapse of materialism and the teleological view of evolution, added to the constant pressure of the Christian spirit, have made two closely connected convictions increasingly dominant — that, in the order of the universe, *the mechanical is means only*, and that the *unity of the ethical life is found in love.* Even where not distinctly affirmed, but perhaps even questioned, it is believed that these two convictions are really present as

fundamental assumptions in the reasoning of our time.

Out of Protestantism in its original criticism of Catholicism, out of philosophy in its emphasis on man as *both* microcosmos and microtheos, and out of science with its implied trend toward the doctrine of divine immanence, has grown the *denial of the separation of the sacred and the secular.*

From the growing sense of the worth of personality, helped particularly by the immensely deepened knowledge of "the other half," and the great influence of the analogy of the organism in the history of thought, has developed the *social conscience* of our time—the definite avowal that we are all members one of another.

The new psychology, too, the latest conspicuous intellectual movement of our day, has not only confirmed the other tendencies already named, but has also added one distinctive contribution of rapidly growing influence—*the central importance of action.* Body and mind, we are made for action. Nor is this a rebound to a new extreme. The natural terminus of all experiences, bodily and mental, is action. For the very sake, therefore, of thought and feeling, one

must act. The emphasis on action is, indeed, a protest against mere intellectualism or romanticism, but it is at the same time an insistence on the unity of man, and on the *whole* man.

And historical criticism has not only strengthened the emphasis on the historical, the concrete, and personal, but has brought into the very foreground the greatest of all spiritual influences, *the practical Lordship of Christ*. "This is not," it has been well said, "an individual or incidental thing, but represents the tide and passion of the time; is, as it were, the sum and essence of the living historical, philosophical, and religious spirit."[1]

These, then, we may believe, if we have succeeded in correctly discerning the trend of the modern age, are the fundamental moral and spiritual convictions of our time: reverence for personality, freedom of conscience, and freedom of investigation; law in the spiritual world, yet the subordination of the mechanical, and the unity of the ethical life in love; no separation of the sacred and secular; the social conscience, the central importance of action, the recognition of Christ as the supreme person.

[1] Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

II. THE INEVITABLENESS OF THEIR INFLUENCE

These convictions are not wholly new—of course not, and they have not grown up in a night, as their sources plainly show; but their present emphasis *is* relatively new, and on the farther side of these convictions lies, not our world, but another. And an age in whose life and thought they are working like yeast simply cannot express itself adequately in the terms of statements made when these convictions were not so felt, and it would be no real service to the church if it could, for it belongs to the very nature of spiritual truth that each age must be its own interpreter in spiritual things.

Now, it is this new world in which we think and live that is the one great source of our dissatisfaction with the older statements in theology. These ruling ideas of our time are constantly at work. We all accept them more or less fully in themselves, and they are certain to prevail increasingly, and their ultimate influence in theology is simply inevitable, and ought to be. What now, do they mean for theology?

In attempting to indicate some of the ways in which it seems that the atmosphere

of our time (so far as it is right) is certain to affect theological statements, one can only bear honest testimony as to the direction in which progress seems to lie for our own generation. In a time of transition like the present it is impossible for any man to speak with frankness and definiteness on theological themes and command the assent of all, perhaps the full assent of any. But truth comes, as we have seen, not through the silence of all, but by each declaring honestly and earnestly his best. Honest thoughtful testimony, charitably and reverently borne, is the greatest need of the immediate present, if we are ever to come to that better intellectual expression of Christianity for which all wait.

THE INFLUENCE OF THIS NEW WORLD ON THEOLOGY

CHAPTER V

SCIENTIFIC INFLUENCES

I. PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF INVESTIGATION

USING the term science in the broadest sense, it is, first of all, concerned with the principle of freedom of investigation. Concerning every phenomenon, there are always two questions to be asked: first, the question as to process—the causal connection, how the phenomenon came to be; second, the question as to meaning—ideal interpretation, what the phenomenon is for. It is plain to the writer that, in an ultimate view of the world, the two questions cannot be kept finally separate; but it is equally plain that, in all proximate inquiries, there is great gain in keeping these two questions distinct. Now every strictly scientific inquiry, as distinguished from a philosophical or theological inquiry, chooses to restrict itself to the problem of causal connection. And the

Protestant principle of freedom of investigation means the full recognition of the legitimacy, value, and authority of literary, historical, and scientific investigation in its own sphere — that of the tracing of causal connections. It means that theology refuses to settle *a priori* how God *must* have acted in any case in nature or in revelation, but turns over to humble, patient, scientific inquiry to determine how he *did* and *does* act. All questions, thus, of natural or mechanical *process*, by which things came to be what they now are, are unreservedly committed to scientific investigation. This means, for example, that all questions as to the conditions of the appearance of life, of man, of conscience; and all questions of the method of God's historical self-revelation — all questions regarding the authorship, age, and unity of the Scriptures — are to be freely and fearlessly investigated in the most strictly scientific way.

Nor ought this absolutely untrammeled scientific investigation to give anxiety to any real believer in God. For scientific investigation simply seeks the facts, and can, therefore, so far as it is successful, only make more clear to us exactly how

God did proceed. And this, if we are really in earnest in our desire to understand God, we ought to be glad to know. If to-morrow men were able to trace in the laboratory the precise steps by which the living arises from the non-living; or if, in some historical seminar, the exact sources and composition of Isaiah could be demonstratively made out, no ideal or religious interest would be in any manner affected, except that we should simply understand a little more fully the method God took in a case in which the mode of his action is to us now quite obscure. We are continually in danger of assuming that vital religious interests are at stake in the decision of questions of mere process.

Our only anxiety can be — and there is room for anxiety here — that the investigators be really competent; and, particularly in the investigation of moral and religious problems, competence requires personal experience in the sphere investigated. One would hardly advise a man, destitute of an ear for music, or appreciation for music, to undertake to write a history of music. And, with the best intentions, in the name of science, some exceedingly crude attempts

at investigation of religion have been made, for simple lack of interpreting experience. It should be clear, therefore, that it is the poorest possible policy for the church to warn off its own scholars from these investigations. Moreover, the only answer to erroneous criticism or science is better criticism or science, not the forbidding of investigation. And the latter, we may be sure, is no service to the church, by whomsoever advocated. As Julius Müller long ago said: "Wounds which have been inflicted on humanity by knowledge can be healed only by knowledge." This is the one sure road to peace.

Now of these scientific investigations theology simply takes the results. It is itself strictly interpretative, and it reserves to itself the right to interpret the results of scientific inquiry. It leaves absolutely to science the tracing of the causal connections; it claims for itself the ideal interpretation. The process belongs to science, the meaning to theology. It is, of course, open to any man to attempt an interpretation of the final philosophical and religious meaning of any given scientific results; but it ought to be clear on all hands that, when

the scientist so interprets his results, he speaks no longer as a scientist, and cannot carry over into the new sphere his weight as a scientific authority. He may have very little claim to recognition in the fields of philosophy and theology. It is time it was recognized that men are not born philosophers and theologians, any more than born scientists. But this consideration in no way affects the principle of absolute freedom of scientific investigation, or the necessity that philosophy and theology use faithfully as data all the assured results of such investigation.

II. RELATION OF THEOLOGY TO NATURAL SCIENCE

Of the purely intellectual influences on theology in our day, that of strictly natural science is particularly strong. We cannot, therefore, avoid, in the second place, the question of the relation of natural science to theology. What does the influence of natural science mean for theology?

It is well to notice at the very start that it is easy to overestimate the importance of this relation and the extent of this influence; and both are often overestimated, I

believe, to-day. Professor James puts the matter in his usual vigorous fashion, when he says,—"The aspiration to be scientific is such an idol of the tribe to the present generation, is so sucked in with his mother's milk by every one of us, that we find it hard to conceive of a creature who should not feel it, and harder still to treat it freely as the altogether peculiar and one-sided subjective interest which it is."[1] Science itself is only one of our ideals; it cannot legitimately rule out other ideals. There may be a "deification of truth," which is only a deification of an intellectual formulation that cannot meet the standard of truth contained in the whole man. There are æsthetic and ethical and religious data, as well as intellectual.

Nevertheless, the immense progress and rightful influence of natural science in our own generation force upon theology (in its wider sense) the problem of the mediation of the mechanical and ideal views of the world. Of the ultimate solution of this problem, Christian theology can have no doubt, for it is involved in its central faith in a *God of love*. And, meanwhile, it ad-

[1] *Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 640.

dresses itself without misgivings to the adjustment of its relation to natural science.

1. *Science's Threefold Restriction of Itself.*—Theology accepts, in the first place, science's own threefold restriction of itself—to experience, to the tracing of purely causal connections, and to phenomena. The restriction to experience implies that science knows that it cannot anticipate, independently of experience in at least allied lines, even in the most perfect cases. And this means that the *full cause* is never really present for science, even in its strictly scientific investigations, in the sense that by any possible analysis of present conditions without experience it can prophesy the results. It is important that we should modestly bear this fact in mind, as a restriction which science must make, in a little fuller sense than it has sometimes recognized, upon itself. Spencer's "Unknowable" demands thus a certain immediate scientific recognition. Lotze does not over-state the facts when he says: "We deceive ourselves when we imagine we can derive the modes in which things act on one another, as self-evident results from the particular properties that now constitute their nature, and from the joint influence of the circumstances of

each occasion. Honest consideration, on the contrary, leads us to make the acknowledgement that the effects actually presented to us by experience are not to be got as necessary conclusions from these premises alone, however we may analyze and recombine their content, but that an unknown power, as it were, having respect to something that we do not meet with among these prior conditions, has annexed to their form the particular form of the result."[1]

Science's restriction of itself to the tracing of purely causal connections has been already dealt with; but this restriction and its restriction to phenomena necessarily assign to philosophy all ultimate questions. Science, as such, does not ask what force, or matter, or being, or change, are in themselves. By the very terms of its problems, it asks only after the actual causal connections of *phenomena* already there, and therefore inevitably excludes all questions especially of ultimate origin and destiny. Moreover, it should be noted, since the scientific question is one of *process* merely, and since no one thinks of seeing God at work in the changes of nature like a man, that the process would

[1] *Microcosmus*, Vol. I, p. 382.

seem the same to the observer, whether he thought it purely mechanical or wholly due to God.

2. *The Universality of Law.*—In the second place, theology accepts unreservedly science's main contention of the universality of law, that mechanism is absolutely universal in extent, though it requires that the principle shall be exactly defined. It asks, that is, that it shall be noted that the principle is *universality* of law—not, as much talk would seem to imply, *uniformity* of law. There has been an amazing haziness concerning this simple point. The true scientific contention is, not that laws are always and everywhere the same, but that there is always law. Theology can the less consent to the replacing of the universality of law by the uniformity of law, because it has itself accepted from science the theory of evolution, and so must insist on an interpretation of the universality of law consistent therewith. But what evolution gives us is exactly not uniformity of law but, as we shall see, successive stages with new laws coming in and becoming dominant, that before had not at all appeared. The new higher stage is practically a miracle from the standpoint of the

lower stage, though the higher laws use the lower without contradicting them.

Theology asks further, in the interest of exactness of thought, that it shall be clearly recognized that, in strictness, laws cannot be spoken of as existing at all, except in one of two ways: either as the actual mode of action of existing things, or as the formulation, in the mind of an observer, of this mode of action. It is impossible, therefore, to affirm a sphere of eternal self-existent laws preceding or independent of *all* existing being. Laws cannot preëxist, nor have any existence of their own apart from all real existing things. In strict accuracy, then, laws can do nothing; they cause nothing; and finally explain nothing. They are our own formulations, based on experience, of the way in which things act, or, in any ultimate statement, of the modes of God's activity.

With this guarding of the principle, theology may not only accept, but itself vigorously affirm on ideal grounds, the universality of law. The interests of religion and science, or of an ideal and mechanical view, are by no means in such opposition here as is often assumed. Religion wishes no lawless world; indeed it has as great an

interest as science in asserting a sphere of law. For a sphere of law is necessary in order to any growth in *knowledge* through experience, since, if there were no law, nothing learned to-day would be of any value to-morrow. Nor could there be any growth in *power* without law, for all our power of accomplishment depends wholly on knowledge of the laws of the forces with which we deal. Growth in *character*, moreover, is similarly conditioned. For in a lawless world, not only would the fundamental suppositions of a moral sphere be set aside, but it would be impossible to learn any of the practical applications of the law of love. A sphere of law, therefore, is the only possible sphere for a progressive being, and it is precisely his progressiveness—his capacity of indefinite growth—that mainly distinguishes man intellectually from the lower animals; and with man all ideal interests come in. Every ideal point of view, then, is concerned to insist upon a sphere of law. It is further to be noticed especially that *freedom* and law are not set over against each other in the way often supposed; but rather that a sphere of law is necessary to give any significance to freedom itself, the condition

of character; for choices look to ends, and there can be no accomplishment of an end without law. For still another and fundamental reason, religion can brook no lawless world; for to allow such a world would make God play fast and loose with his creatures. In order, then, to the foundation faith in the fidelity and trustworthiness of God himself, there must be law.

In its own distinct sphere of the moral and spiritual life, moreover, theology distinctly welcomes the idea of law. Drummond, more than any other man, has brought this home to the religious consciousness of our generation, and it is his greatest contribution —*not* that there is the *same* law for the natural and the spiritual world (as he at first affirmed), but that there *is* law; that there are definite conditions to be fulfilled for any spiritual attainment, that these conditions may be known, and that when fulfilled you may count on the results. Theology has much to gain in clearness and precision of statement, and in power of appeal, in the development of this line of thought.

These varied and most significant considerations ought certainly to make it unmistakably clear that the religious, equally with

the scientific, interest demands a law-abiding universe.

The whole ideal contention, and the interest of theology, therefore, are not at all against law, against mechanism; theology must rather, with science, insist upon this. The contention *is* that mechanism is means only, and means must not be mistaken for ends nor dominate ends. And in this contention, every man, scientist or not, is interested. No man is without concern in the question, Is there any really *rational* universe, with any justifiable end? Have ideals of any kind any real place in this universe? The simple fact that the so-called "problem of evil" is a *universal* problem, that it necessarily arises for every thoughtful man, is the best possible proof that every man actually makes the assumption which underlies the ideal contention that mechanism is means only. That is, all these questionings concerning the problem of evil assume that the world ought to have *worth*, and not mere logical consistency, if it is to be really rational.

It is with this general view of law that the question of miracle is connected.

CHAPTER VI

MIRACLES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCIENCE

I. MECHANISM UNIVERSAL IN EXTENT, BUT SUBORDINATE IN SIGNIFICANCE

THE religious interest in miracle is essentially the same as that involved in any ideal view of the world. The insistence on miracle for the religious man means the insistence on a living God, and the insistence that, though mechanism is absolutely universal in extent, nevertheless, as Lotze says, "it is completely subordinate in significance." We are not to make a god of mechanism, it declares, nor put mechanism above God. The universality of law, therefore, is to theology only the perfect consistency in the modes of activity of God in carrying out his immutable purpose of love. Hence, God will always act according to law — that is, in perfect consistency with his unchanging purpose of love; but his action may not always be formulable under any of the laws of nature known to us.

The religious world, this means, cannot be content with special acts of love here and there; it must know that *all* the action of God rests on love. Just as in the modification of the design argument by evolution we replace various smaller designs testifying to intelligence by one all-embracing design, so do we here replace the many miracles testifying to love by the one great miracle, that an infinite purpose of love is the source of all. "All's love, yet all's law." That is, the religious view must hold that the so-called "departures from the uniformity of nature" are themselves according to law, called out by the same consistency of the loving purpose of God as the so-called "uniformity." Rare phenomena are not lawless.

II. A QUESTION OF FACT

The question of the actual occurrence of what we call miracles is primarily a question of fact, as in the case of all new phenomena and discoveries. Philosophical speculation, masquerading as science, cannot be allowed *a priori* to block the way to a really inductive scientific investigation of the facts. In the case of all asserted discoveries of extra-

ordinary phenomena, we simply ask, are these things true? If they are, then we say, doubtless they are illustrations of a wider law, a larger correlation, than we have hitherto recognized. So science had to proceed, for example, in the recognition of the facts of organic chemistry and of the Roentgen rays. Just such a procedure, and no other, is required in the case of miracles.

The attempts deliberately to eliminate the miraculous from the Gospel records have scarcely followed this scientific procedure. And, while the subject is not without its difficulties, it is hardly too much to say that, from the time of Paulus down to the present, these attempts to eliminate the miraculous have broken down of their own weight. They do not give the impression of a straightforward scientific historical inquiry. They start from an *a priori* assumption; the argument is cumbrous; and certain entirely subsidiary principles of explanation are so greatly overworked as to leave a wholly unsatisfying impression on the mind of one who has really at any time held the question open. And this is written, with even so late and careful an attempt as that

of Pfleiderer, in his *Philosophy and Development of Religion*, distinctly in mind. The present is certainly no time for men to be determining beforehand what can or cannot be in the realm of facts.

This consideration is of such importance as to deserve detailed illustration from a recent case of exposition, concisely set forth by the editor of *The Expository Times*:[1] "The greatest difficulty in the way of disbelieving the miracles in the Gospels is the difficulty of accounting for their existence. If Jesus did not perform them, some one invented them. Who invented them? And who fitted them into their place? And who made them part of the picture of the Jesus of the Gospels? Perhaps some one will come some day and tell us. No one has come yet. The latest explanation of the existence of the Gospel miracles is just as incredible as the earliest. In his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, just published, Dr. G. L. Cary states the three possible hypotheses which have been suggested to account for the story — a story told by all the Synoptists — of the healing of the leper. The first hypothesis is that it was made up by one

[1] *The Expository Times*, August, 1900, p. 483.

of the early disciples in imitation of the story in the Old Testament of the wonderful cure of Naaman. 'This hypothesis,' says Dr. Cary, 'now has few, if any, defenders.' The second hypothesis is that of the modern Dutch school of criticism. The story, says this school, was originally intended as a symbolic representation of the helpful relation which Jesus sustained to the outcasts of society. He figuratively called himself a physician. Leprosy is the fittest possible symbol for the disease of sin. So his cures of moral leprosy became transformed, in the thought of a succeeding age, into cures of the bodily disease. Dr. Cary fears that this supposition wants 'a solid basis of ascertainable fact,' since Jesus only once, and then indirectly, calls himself a physician of souls. One hypothesis remains. It is Dr. Cary's own, though not exclusively, and he explains it at some length. Jesus saw that the leper was really not a leper, and told him to go to the priest, who would pronounce him clean. The disciples, and indeed the man himself, did not see so clearly as Jesus did. They all thought that his disease was really leprosy. When the man was pronounced clean they saw that they had been mistaken.

Jesus was right. The man had not been a leper. The incident would have been allowed to pass, and would probably have been forgotten, if it had not been that Jesus afterwards got the reputation of being a healer of disease. Then this case was remembered. As it passed from mouth to mouth it was gradually elaborated. And when it came to be set down in the Gospels it had assumed the proportions of a striking miracle." It is not entirely easy to believe this.

A really scientific history seems more likely to come to the sober conclusion of Sanday: "The truth is that the historian who tries to construct a reasoned picture of the Life of Christ finds that he cannot dispense with the miracles. He is confronted with the fact that no sooner had the life of Jesus ended in apparent failure and shame than the great body of Christians—not an individual here and there, but the great mass of the Church—passed over at once to the fixed belief that he was God. . . . There must have been something about the Life, a broad and substantial element in it, which *they could recognize as* supernatural and divine—not that we can recognize, but

which they could recognize with the ideas of the time. Eliminate miracles from the career of Jesus, and the belief of Christians, from the first moment that we have undoubted contemporary evidence of it (say A. D. 50), becomes an insoluble enigma."[1]

The great miracle, in fact, is always *Christ himself*,—his life, character, and teaching. And this is incontestable fact. Here now is a great new cause. On the principle of causality itself, ought we not, as Dr. Abbott suggests, to expect new effects? And have we fairly faced the difficulties we should feel, if such works as the Gospels attribute to Christ were not recorded of him? Suppose the miraculous entirely eliminated from the record, should we not raise at once the difficulty involved in the preceding consideration, as well as in that of Sanday? Can Christ, we should say, be the great new cause we suppose him, and no unusual phenomena in varied lines of activity accompany him? Should we not feel compelled, too, to ask, must his *love* not have manifested itself in response to the needs about him, according to his power? The miracles are positively helpful, more-

[1] Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 627.

over, in showing, as Bruce intimates, that Christianity is no "ultra-spiritualism." "They proclaim *social* salvation, however subordinate in value as compared with *soul* salvation, as nevertheless a part of the grand redemptive plan."[1]

III. A MIRACLE, NOT AN ISOLATED WONDER

Our whole difficulty is really with the "isolated wonder," as Huxley himself admirably illustrated when, in supposed objection to miracles, he asked if any testimony would make it credible that a centaur had been seen trotting down Regent street, London. No, probably not; the phenomenon is absolutely without significance or connection with any larger order. But exactly that lack of significance and connection with a larger order is most vigorously denied by the religious man of Christian miracles. Perhaps no one has put this point more clearly than Dr. John H. Denison: "Nothing could be more marvelous or opposed to common human experience than the report that the earth revolves around the sun; yet we accept that testimony of the astronomers, not because

[1] *Apologetics*, p. 378.

there is so much of it, but because we have ourselves attained to such a notion of the force of gravity and the order of the universe that the statement appears reasonable to us. Such evidence, although logical and absolutely satisfying, is not immediately transferable. A savage might successfully challenge us to prove the Copernican theory to the satisfaction of his mind; it would involve too much process. This, however, does not minimize the value of the evidence; it simply puts a premium just where it ought to be put, on scientific education. The same is true with respect to miracles.

"This, indeed, is the radical ground for unbelief in any marvel, that it points to nothing, that it stands by itself, apart from any order or causation. But the miracles do not stand by themselves; they are profoundly significant; they are a part of a vast and orderly spiritual movement, and those who have perceived the significance and order of that movement, or who have experienced even in a small degree its causation, have found in these things the strongest and most rational evidence for a miraculous dispensation. It is true that this evidence cannot be imparted by a brief process to a man destitute of spir-

itual perception or experience, but that does not invalidate the rationality of the evidence; it puts a premium just where it should be put, on spiritual culture.

"As the philosophy of experience broadened out, Hume's postulate was reinforced so as to read, 'A miracle is contrary to a law of nature; therefore an overweighting amount of evidence is required to prove it.' But the same lack of breadth soon appeared in this postulate. Our experience does not cover the whole breadth of nature. We are never certain but that some new and larger order may begin to disclose itself, and it is, in fact, just such a larger order which the miracles appear to suggest and always have suggested to some of the most spiritual and philosophical minds of the race."[1]

Let it be clear, then, that religion has no call to defend the "isolated wonder"; its interest does not at all lie here. It simply takes the soundly scientific position of belief in an all-embracing order, and of refusal to allow any facts to be shut out by *a priori* speculation or prejudice. It believes that such an attitude will lead naturally to faith

[1] "Current Delusions Concerning Miracles," *The New World*, September, 1898, pp. 544, 545.

in the reasonableness of the direct living adapting relation of God to his creation, involved in the assertion of miracle.

IV. GOD'S RELATION TO PERSONS

God is a spirit; he may be supra-personal, as Paulsen says; he certainly cannot be sub-personal. There is therefore no sound reason, philosophical or scientific, for denying him personal relation with other spirits,—direct access to them. We have such access to other minds. Can it be that he who made them and knows every avenue of approach to them has not? We can change the course of life of our fellow creatures. Is he powerless? Even Pfleiderer can say: "And why should it be less possible for God to enter into loving fellowship with us than for men to do so with each other? I should be inclined to think that he is even more capable of doing so."[1] To deny such direct access of God to the human spirit is really to deny the possibility of revelation, to deny prayer, to deny any living contact with God, to deny any real living concrete God at all. It is to go back to something very like the cast-off

[1] Quoted by Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 63.

deism of the eighteenth century. Such a doctrine is already condemned by history. And a man is not likely long to stay in that position. Professor Orr seems wholly justified in saying: "The kind of theism that remains after the Christian element has been removed out of it is not one fitted to satisfy either the reason or the heart."[1] And one must go farther and say, in the language of one of the greatest minds of our century: "There is nothing whatever that stands in opposition to the further conviction that God, at particular moments and in particular persons, may have stood nearer to humanity, or may have revealed himself at such moments and in such persons in a more eminent way than at other moments and in other persons. . . . It is even without doubt legitimate to regard the relation in which he [Christ] stood to God as absolutely unique, not only as to degree but also as to its essential quality."[2]

V. GOD'S RELATION TO NATURE

So far, therefore, as miracle implies only direct relation with men, we find no diffi-

[1] *Op. Cit.*, p. 49.

[2] Lotze, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, Ginn's edition, pp. 149, 150.

culty. Our difficulty is felt only in the world of nature. And here a direct solution may be open to us through psycho-physical laws in the control of the human mind over body and matter. But independently of this suggestion, it may be of value to analyze a little more perfectly the difficulty felt as to miracle in the world of nature. Suppose now some miraculous occurrence in nature. We should search for the conditions, the cause. We might be able to trace the occurrence a certain distance but no farther, for this is what makes it seem miraculous. Is it now our thought that God came in at just this point directly, just as a man might, putting his hand in from without, and changing conditions absolutely without means or in utter contrast with the usual relation of God to nature? Can we really carry such a conception through, or has religion any interest in so doing? Do we really mean to make God's relation to nature exactly the same as our own, except that he has greater knowledge of its laws and therefore greater power in its manipulation? Is this not to put him in an entirely external and finite relation to nature? putting laws above God in the same sense in which they are

above us? Should we not rather say,—Doubtless God's relation to nature in this miraculous occurrence remains just what it always is? The entire course of his action here we are unable completely to follow, but if we could, do we not feel sure that we should trace what we *call* an unbroken connection; that is, that we should find action wholly consistent with the rest of God's action elsewhere, and that means according to law (though not now known to us)? How otherwise indeed do we succeed at all in preserving our belief in the universality of law in the face of our continually enlarging knowledge of nature?

There are two views often put in opposition to each other which are imbued fundamentally with the same error: one, that laws are external to God, above him, and so machinery supreme—a false victory for the scientific view; the other, that God is external to nature, as a finite being—a false victory for the religious view. Here again, then, there is both a scientific and a religious interest at work. It is not enough to say: God has not tied his hands, will not be a slave to his own laws. This, while right in popular terms and in intention,

assumes just that external and finite relation of God to nature, which religion too cannot allow. The laws have no independent existence; they grow themselves right out of the infinite purpose of love which we wish to defend. Even those few laws which we do so far know, are at all because love demanded them; they will never contravene love, but they are themselves no exhaustive expression of the richness of the Infinite Life and Love. Perhaps the best conception we can form is that of a complex organism of laws, physical, psychical, and psycho-physical, which immediately and continuously reflects and expresses the meaning and content of the Infinite Life; and whose unity and consistency are simply the unity and consistency of the Eternal Spirit of Love, though the full meaning of the life of that Spirit we may be sure infinitely transcends even this highest conception of its expression. At present it seems most easy and natural to conceive, through the medium of psycho-physical laws, God's loving adaptations of his action in nature to the highest needs of his children (which is the essence of the religious assertion of miracle). But whatever the special mode

of conception, as certainly as the ministries of the loving spirit are not inconsistent with the purpose of love, so certainly will whatever the Infinite Love of God requires find unstinted and consistent expression of itself in that complex of activities which we strive to formulate in laws.

No doubt in theology the trend should always be away from the mechanical; and no doubt in science the trend should always be toward the mechanical; and no doubt in all proximate inquiries theology does have to do only with the ideal interpretation, science only with the causal connection; no doubt indeed science as such has no other problem than causal connections,—but in ultimate thinking, both the theologian and the scientist as men cannot refuse to face the question of the possible unity of the causal connections and the ideal interpretation, and this is at bottom the question of miracle. The scientist must ask, Has the complex of laws any real final meaning? And there is no answer short of the purpose of love in the Infinite. The theologian must ask, How does the ideal meaning which I give to the Infinite Life express itself in the actual world of law which I find? And he can

only say: The unchanging purpose of the Infinite Love finds its partial expression in the unity and consistency of a great complex organism of laws, physical, psychical, and psycho-physical.

VI. THE EVIDENCE OF THE LARGER DOMINANT SPIRITUAL ORDER

Evolution itself, we shall see, points to just such a larger dominant spiritual order, in that man is its goal, with whom the physical evolution is arrested and the spiritual unending evolution begins. According to the law of cyclical movement, this last developed spiritual order ought to dominate the lower and use it, though it does not contradict it. Moreover with man, as must be more fully pointed out later, personal relations,—clear relations of self-revelation and answering faith—come in. It is in full harmony with the laws of this stage, that God should reveal himself to the open mind.

This dominance of the spiritual order, moreover, we have already seen, is really required by any ideal view, that is, by any finally rational view of the world; for only

that world can be ultimately defended as rational, in which moral and spiritual ends rule.

To such a spiritual order too, especially the facts of the Old Testament and New Testament revelation—above all Christ—distinctly point. Here is a great actual world movement, which cannot be ignored, if we mean to face the facts. To quote Dr. Denison once more: "When science confronts a fact like the consciousness of the prophets and apostles, if she cannot account for it, she interrogates it; she endeavors to find out the contents of that consciousness, asking, Is it an ethical consciousness? Is it rational and trustworthy? This is not mere guess-work; the question is, Do its ideas, sensibilities and purposes, form a coherent and transparent unity? Thus Keim has studied the consciousness of Paul. Thus men for ages have studied the consciousness of Jesus; and the more closely we study their consciousness from the psychological standpoint, the more do we discover its reasonableness, coherence and normality. Paul and Christ are trustworthy witnesses; they speak understandingly of their inner experience; they have explored and tested their

own spiritual phenomena. Careful observation of spiritual facts and laws is indicated by the words of both. Their ethical consciousness far transcends ours, but it is no muddle to them; they understand and announce the laws of their experience. It is, therefore, scientific to accept their testimony. That testimony is, 'The Holy Spirit spoke to us; the life of God was manifested; we were intrusted with an authoritative message; we had an economy of the spirit.' This testimony is unimpeachable; no fact of science contradicts it; no overweighting testimony is needed. If any were, we have overwhelming corroboration in the whole history of this unique esoteric order. As we have already seen, it accords with the only tenable hypothesis; it is the least of two marvels; we are forced to choose between a divine miracle and a miraculous delusion which makes for righteousness."

The question of miracle is, then, nowhere the question of the "isolated wonder," but everywhere rather the question of the wider law, the larger correlation, the dominant spiritual order increasingly clear to a growing spiritual culture, the consistency of the one great loving purpose of a God great enough

and loving enough to be all that his children need.

The discussion of the special relation of theology to the theory of evolution, as held by scientists, will throw some further light on this question of miracle, but deserves separate treatment.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPECIAL BEARING OF EVOLUTION

IN the relation of theology to natural science, theology not only accepts science's three-fold restriction of itself, and its insistence upon the universality of law; but it also accepts the theory of evolution as a general statement of the method of God's working. And theology may receive Le Conte's definition of evolution as "continuous progressive change according to certain laws and by means of resident forces"; denoting the laws, with him, as "the law of differentiation, the law of progress of the whole, and the law of cyclical movement."[1] To all this, theology need make no objection; and in accepting the theory of evolution, it would only renew its own older emphasis upon the immanence of God.

I. THE NEED OF PRECISION IN OUR THOUGHT OF EVOLUTION

The theologian wishes only that there should be real precision of thought as to

[1] *Evolution and Its Relation to Religious Thought*, pp. 8, 11.

what the evolution theory is. He has a suspicion that, as in many another case, difficulty comes only because the principle is not carried completely through. The trouble in evolution is that we are only *half* evolutionists. Theology, therefore, is interested only to insist, in the first place, that evolution means real evolution — a succession of stages with new phenomena and new laws — not uniformity or identity of laws; and this the law of cyclical movement itself asserts. Illustrating this law, Le Conte himself says: "When each group of faculties culminates and declines, it does not perish, but only becomes subordinate to the next higher group."[1] Let it be clearly seen, therefore, that evolution involves a succession of stages with new phenomena and new laws.

In the second place, theology insists that, if we are not to be only half evolutionists, it must be seen that evolution *does not stop with the animal series*, but includes the human stage. Evolution cannot play double with its own conception, making it mean now continuous progress, and now a dead level. If, in the interest of maintaining the close connection of man with the animal world, it is

[1] *Op. Cit.*, p. 23.

asserted that man clearly belongs in the evolution series, then this fact cannot be ignored or denied when we ask as to the meaning of the entire evolution. We may not ignore in one part of our argument what we emphasize in another part. There is to be, then, no ambiguity when we say evolution includes the human stage. The theory of evolution, thus, does not mean the putting of everything on a dead level, especially not a degrading of everything to the lowest level. That was an early and crude misunderstanding of the evolution theory; but it is, in fact, quite inconsistent with any real evolution.

The heart of the ideal contention concerning evolution may be said to be that, when the new appears, it is really *new*,—it has not appeared before. It was not really present before. We are at least not to make the great but common mistake of supposing that the evolving organism contains in itself the source of all that follows,—that, as Drummond puts it, the plant has grown out of its roots. "Evolution is not to unfold from within; it is to infold from without." A germ can do nothing without environment; and it is not in the germ alone but in the entire environment, that, even in the strict

scientific sense, we are to look for the conditions of the succeeding stage. And, moreover, as Drummond says, "the environment itself rises with every evolution of any form of life."[1]

We cannot assume even that the succeeding stage is present in the sense that all its *conditions* are fully present, *before* the new stage appears. We are not to fool ourselves, in learned delusion, with the convenient conception of potentiality, and say that the next stage is potentially present; if *all* the conditions of a thing are fully present, the thing must appear coincidentally. It is not possible to conceive, when we think clearly, that all the conditions of a phenomenon are fully present, and yet that the phenomenon tarries. Something really new, then, appears, in the course of evolution.

One other consideration deserves attention, in this discussion of the new in evolution. We have already seen that, even in the most perfect case, science cannot anticipate the next stage in any process independently of previous experience. Least of all

[1] Drummond's *The Ascent of Man*, Chap. X, Involution; probably the strongest part of Drummond's discussion of evolution.

can it do so in the successive stages of evolution. This means that, in the strict scientific sense, the full cause of the next stage is not present in that now passing, in such sense as to reveal itself to any possible analysis of ours. To deny the reality of the new, under such circumstances, is little short of sophistry. Not, then, as a religious or ideal contention, but in simple recognition of the facts, if we wish to be thorough-going in our conception of evolution, we seem driven to say with Lotze:[1] "Thus at bottom everything finite works only by that in it which makes it secretly better than it seems, by the essential power of the Infinite latent even in it; the power and capability of action belong not to the outer wrapping of particular properties, but solely to the core, in so far as therein enveloped. Now, if we give the name of *nature of a thing* to the fused and simplified duplicity of the Infinite Being that has in it assumed this particular form, or of the finite form that has become filled with the Infinite, we shall be entitled from this nature of the thing to derive all modes of its behavior as necessary consequences"—but only from the nature of the thing so defined. For all finite

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 384.

investigation, then, the reality of the new in evolution cannot be questioned; and Le Conte is right, moreover, in affirming that evolution leads naturally to increased emphasis on the immanence of God.

It would also help many if they recognized that essentially the same difficulties are involved in the development of the individual as in the evolution of the race. It is true of the individual that he passes through all the stages from the lowest animal to the highest human stage, and in the development of the individual as of the race we can draw no sharp lines between stages; and yet it is perfectly evident also that differences, real and profound, have come in. There is a time, for example, when the child is clearly not a responsible moral being; there is a later time when just as clearly he is responsible, but one cannot say just when the transition took place. We do not seriously question the reality of the new in the development of the individual; the difficulties are not greater in the evolution of the race. Due weight has seldom been given to this parallel between the development of the individual and the evolution of the race; for, as Schmid has clearly pointed

out, "the idea of a development of species, and also of man, does not offer to theistic reasoning any new or any other difficulties than those which have been long present, and which had found their solution in the religious consciousness long before any idea of evolution disturbed the mind."[1]

It may be assumed, then, as in the development of the individual, that the process is ever so gradual, and that when the conditions for the appearance of the new stage are completed, it will appear; but when the new stage appears—life, self-consciousness, moral responsibility, or what not—it is really new. It had not appeared before. Courtney[2] maintained the whole ideal contention much more fully, perhaps, than he knew, when he wrote fifteen years ago: "I *was* an anthropoid ape once, a mollusc, an ascidian, a bit of protoplasm; but, whether by chance or providence, I am not now. When I was an ape, I thought as an ape, I acted as an ape, I lived as an ape; but when I became a man, I put away apish things. Man's moral nature is what

[1] See *Theories of Darwin*, pp. 265 ff. This book is one of the most thorough of all the discussions of the bearings of evolution.

[2] *Studies in Philosophy*, Chap. VI.

it is, not what it was." Otherwise, there would be no real evolution.

II. THE GENERAL GAINS OF THE EVOLUTION POINT OF VIEW

If, then, that conception of evolution is maintained which its own definition and laws require, theology finds no religious or ideal consideration that need hinder it in accepting the most absolute and radical form of the evolution theory without any thought of intervention at any point in the process. It feels no interest in insisting upon certain unbridged gaps in the series as essential at all to a religious view of the world; though many have conceived that all religion is here at stake. The fact is, as we have seen, that we can as little do without God at any point as at these supposed gaps; so that in a thorough-going view it is indifferent whether we say, there are in truth gaps everywhere, or there are no gaps at all. The most absolute evolution theory, so long as it is scientific at all, can be only a description of the process by which God has worked, of the method which he has employed. Theology is perfectly ready to

accept the facts, whatever they may be. As it has been well said: "Whichever way of creation God may have chosen, in none can the dependence of the universe on him become slacker, in none be drawn closer."[1]

And more than this is true. Not only is the religious interest here not opposed to the scientific; in one important particular it is identical with it. For its own sake, theology can remain satisfied no longer with the old, inconsistent view of a virtual independence of the world in the larger part of it, and of direct dependence on God at certain points only, where we cannot yet trace the process of God's working. It is quite unwilling to say God is only where we cannot understand him. It is quite unwilling to admit that increasing knowledge of God's working is progressive elimination of God from the universe. It is quite unwilling to take its stand on gaps or base its arguments for God on ignorance. It believes in *God* —in a God upon whom the whole universe, in every least atom of it, and in every humblest spirit of it, is absolutely dependent. Of that dependence it is certain, and no study of the *method* of it can make it less certain.

[1] Lotze, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 374.

Aside from this aid to a more unified thinking, there are four great general gains for theology in the evolution point of view. In the first place, evolution gives a larger view of the method, plan, and aim of God in the universe. If we may accept the general theory of evolution, we get a far longer sweep of the divine on-going, from which we may better judge as to its direction and goal. The advantage here is like having a larger portion of the orbit of a planet accessible in calculating its curve. Light upon any part of the process, by which the universe has come to be what it is, cannot be without significance in understanding the whole.

In the second place, and in consequence of its larger view of the method, plan, and aim of God, evolution has led to a great extension and strengthening of the design argument. The precise contrary at first seemed true; but the final gain can hardly be questioned. The added power of the argument in the new form given by evolution is well illustrated by John Fiske's *The Destiny of Man*. Man is seen to be even more obviously than before the crown and goal of creation; and the whole develop-

ment is seen to point forward to a moral and spiritual being, capable of endless growth, and to find therein its meaning.

Two other gains evolution has brought to theology. It has made it more easy to see the harmony between the plan of God in the natural world and his plan in the spiritual world,—to see that one great plan really embraces both, that one mind is working to a single goal in the whole. And the previous discussion should have already made it clear that evolution tends also to an enlarged conception of God in his immanence in the world.

Theology rejoices, then, in the larger view which evolution seems to give of the method, plan, and aim of God in the universe; in the great extension and strengthening of the design argument; in the harmony it brings into the divine methods; and in the enlarged conception of God in his immanence in the world.

III. AS TO THE DETAILED APPLICATION OF EVOLUTION TO THEOLOGY

Outside of these general gains which the evolution theory brings, and in which most

would probably agree, exactly what does the detailed application of evolution to theological and ethical problems mean? Is there not much confusion of thought here that often ends only in juggling with phrases, both on the side of the mechanical philosopher and on the side of the religious apologist?

If the *entire* evolution series, including man, with his moral and spiritual nature, is meant, then the later stages will be recognized, according to the law of cyclical movement, as higher, and as having their own peculiar phenomena and laws, and interpreted accordingly, but with due regard to the lower stages.

If the *purely animal organic evolution* is meant, then the analogy is taken wholly from the realm *below* man; and, however suggestive, must obviously, on the principle of evolution itself, prove inadequate for an interpretation of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual life of man, and must finally break down, as it does even in the hands of so skilful and sympathetic an interpreter as Drummond. The analogy of organic evolution is only the farthest possible extension of the very fruitful analogy of the

organism that has been so influential in the history of thought from Paul to Shaftesbury and Kant, and down to modern ethics and sociology. It is the most adequate analogy that nature furnishes us, and it is *useful* to apply it as fully as possible in order to discern the essential harmony of the laws in all the stages, and to see that the natural world is from the same hand as the moral. But, after all is said, it is still only an analogy from nature, and quite inadequate to set forth all the life of the spirit in itself and its personal relations. We are spirits, not organisms, and society is a society of persons, not an organism. The theory of the evolution of the animal series, fully accepted, therefore, in its most radical form, is still no universal solvent of ethical and theological questions where personal relations replace organic.

It is a perversion of the evolution theory in its real entirety to attempt to bring all the higher stages under the laws of the lower. Shall we attempt to state the laws of the organism in terms of crystallization? Yet something very like this is what the application of evolution to theology and ethics seems to mean to many. The inadequacy

of the method is seen from the way in which many of the most serious difficulties have to be solved by bringing in considerations entirely apart from evolution. Although, therefore, the writer shares with the enthusiastic advocates of evolution in theology the freest acceptance of evolution in its fullest form, he does not have their confidence in its wonder-working power in theology. It is true that the attempt to state the entire ethical or sociological or theological problem in biological terms—in terms of life—of organic evolution, is very fascinating and sounds very scientific; but in truth its success is its failure, for it can succeed only by forgetting the essential nature of that with which it is dealing—spirit, not physical life. Guardedly used, the analogy is helpful, but adequate it never is.

On the human stage of evolution we have reached persons and personal relations, and the laws are those of personal relations. God will deal with us on this stage in accordance with the principle of evolution, if he deals with us as persons and enters into personal relations with us. And this Christianity has always believed. The application of evolution here will simply mean, there-

fore, that in these personal relations with men God's self-revelation at every stage will be adapted to men's capacities to receive, and will progress as rapidly as possible; that the complete revelation in Christ comes as soon as there are men who can use it with value and can preserve it for a progressive evaluation by those who follow.

Two or three further considerations will help to clearness here. We need to remember that any adequate view of evolution must recognize evolution both in the organism and in the environment; and that the most important factors in our human environment are persons, the supreme factor, the Supreme Person; and, moreover, that in God's education of us there is a development in the personal relation adapted to our growth. Christ now, it is to be noted, belongs in this divine evolutionary self-revelation of God, — not properly in the human evolution; and it is in this developing revelation that evolution has to view him. That is, Christ's life, as a fact, can be understood or explained, not in the light of a merely human purpose, but only in the light of a unique divine purpose; but in the progressive manifestation of that divine purpose it

finds its real and proper place. A consistent view of evolution must recognize the human stage, with its personal relations. We have no call to show that in these personal relations of men with men, or of God with men, all that occurs can be brought under the laws that hold on the lower stages.

It is vain, therefore, to look for revolutionary results in the statement of individual theological doctrines from the theory of evolution in its narrower scope. Helpful analogies and suggestive points of view we shall have, but scarcely more. But the legitimate application of evolution in its entirety is a thing to be welcomed, not feared. All God's ways are harmonious.

IV. CONCLUSION UPON MIRACLES AND EVOLUTION

In concluding the discussion of miracles and of evolution, it may be well, even more definitely than has yet been done, to bring the view here defended face to face with another view that claims to be the only true scientific view, and toward which, it cannot be denied, there is in certain circles a strong trend. Probably no one has stated this view more clearly or more strongly than Pflei-

derer. "The fundamental error," he says, "of the theologians of the new faith of the present day consists in this, that they think one can without hesitation acknowledge the validity of the same scientific method in the domain of nature which they refuse to apply to that of history. This is a cardinal logical contradiction, out of which naturally proceed all the contradictions and inconsequences previously presented in detail. There is only the one choice: Either the evolutionary mode of thought is right, in which case it must be uniform in all fields of investigation, in history, then, as well as in nature; or it is wrong, in which case the views of nature acquired by means of it are not justified, and we have no right to prefer them to the traditions of faith. On which side of this dilemma the theologian ought to range himself cannot, for the theologian who claims a scientific character for theology (and this all those of the new faith do), be a single moment doubtful.

"What consequences now will follow the application of the doctrine of evolution to the theological consideration of history? First of all, it is evident that it excludes miracles in every sense of the word — not

merely the nature-miracle (this the men of the new faith drop without pain), but also just as much the spirit-miracle, that is, the intervention of a foreign power in the human soul, whereby conditions are produced in it which do not result from the causal connection with antecedent conditions. If it is the methodic cardinal proposition of the science of to-day that we have to explain every condition as the causally determined development out of a preceding one, this excludes on principle the appearance of any condition, event, action or personality which is not explicable out of the factors of the preceding conditions and according to the laws of genesis in general."

Yet Pfleiderer also says: "That the divine principle which enlightens every man has revealed itself in an extraordinary manner in individual men by reason of the especial force and purity of their consciousness of God, and that among these prophets of the rational God-consciousness Jesus takes the highest rank, so that one may see in him the most powerful human organ of that principle—these are declarations that may be made without contradicting the strictly scientific view of history. For the distinguish-

ing between the divine principle and the human person, which is the kernel of the church's doctrine of the God-man, leaves open the possibility of a purely historical apprehension of the human person of Jesus as a specially conditioned causal link in the connection of the development of the human mind. The divine in Jesus does not denote a violent rupture of the course of human history with the exclusion of all causal connection and all human personality, but it lies at the basis of all this history from beginning to end; it dwells in it as the divine Logos, as the rational aptitude of human nature, as impulse to the true and good, as God-consciousness."[1]

Now, one need not question the religious sincerity of these latter utterances; and certainly no one who has had the privilege of hearing Pfleiderer in his own lecture-room, especially in his practical counsels to theological students, will question the genuineness and significance of his religious faith. Nevertheless, it may well be doubted if the view Pfleiderer here presents is either in itself justified, or is at all consistent with

[1] Pfleiderer, *Evolution and Theology and Other Essays*, pp. 8, 9; 17, 18.

his own religious affirmations here and elsewhere.

That we are not to forget, if we believe in God in any sense, that no finite being can be conceived as metaphysically independent of God; that God is expressed of course in the actual constitution and capabilities of human beings; and, finally, that even a divine education of men could not ignore the stage of development reached by them, and must therefore be gradual and adapted, and so allow in this sense no absolute break — all these propositions may be not only admitted but asserted without dispute.

But there is a question in dispute which, in the judgment of the writer, is so important as to involve the question of the rational possibility of anything that can justly be called religion, unless, indeed, one is willing to dignify Positivism with that name. That question is: Does anything occur in nature or in history which cannot be fully accounted for as due to the reciprocal action of finite things or persons? Is God a mere indifferent stage for finite activities? or is he in any sense transcendent? and, if so, is that transcendent God ever for us a reality? Especially does God ever act in history in any other way

than is completely included in activities which are to be referred in the strictest sense to men, and to them as necessarily determined by the preceding stage? Pfleiderer's view seems really to deny all transcendence in God, and to admit even his immanence only as absolutely restricted to what is contained in the purely human. Logically he has no room even for the slightest mental influence of God, considered as other than the man himself. I bring together in rapid summary the considerations which, in the light of the preceding discussion, seem to me to preclude, in spite of its scientific pretensions, such a view as this of Pfleiderer's.

1. In the first place, the temptation of any one holding strongly to a theory is to ignore the facts for which it cannot account. But it must not be forgotten that it is the *first* business of science to take account of all the facts; it cannot *a priori* rule out any fact at the demand of any hypothesis. The attempted application of this mechanical theory in history, though Pfleiderer says it is "a brilliant success," whether in Pfleiderer's own hands or in those of others, leaves me with the strong impression that there is much that

the theory is simply forced to ignore. There must be frequent recurrence to such helps as "an especially powerful and happy religious moral nature," "a specially conditioned causal link," etc.—for which no real causal account, in Pfleiderer's sense, can be given—in order to make the theory work at all. As unprejudiced scientific observers, we ought not to deceive ourselves with phrases like these, which mean that we simply are not able to trace a causal connection. In fact, we are quite unable, and have no rational hope of ever being able, to trace any such precise connections in even a modified sense where great personalities are involved. The most valuable history is in this sense not strictly scientific.

This point is put clearly by Gardner.[1] "Every historian worthy of the name now writes more or less completely under the dominion of the idea of evolution. But many writers fail to see the limits of evolution as applied to history, and the natural prejudices of the evolutionary method, against which one has to guard one's self. The more a historian is possessed by the genius of evolution, the more likely he is to disregard that in history which is most human and most divine."

[1] *Exploratio Evangelica*, pp. 135–37.

"It is not difficult to prove that advanced historians sometimes mistake the prejudices of their method for objective tendencies of human progress." "So history must frankly accept the doctrine of development and yet keep itself from inanity and death by insisting on the presence in history, through all developments and amid all clashes of force, of will, character, and divine inspiration."

2. In the second place, as we have seen, science, according to its own chosen conception, is limited by experience; it cannot prophesy independently of experience. Accurately interpreted, this seems to require the assertion that strictly all we really see in nature, in the case of reciprocally acting beings, is concomitance and co-variation.[1] We do not discern really causal connections, but only occasions; that is, in even the most favorable case, even in inorganic nature in a case in which we count our explanation perfect and our scientific task completed, we are obliged to admit an unknown Infinite, as alone giving real causal connection. At least in this same sense, we must admit the activity

[1] *Cf.* Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 211 ff. The same view is taken on strictly scientific grounds by Prof. N. S. Shaler. the geologist, in his *The Individual: A Study of Life and Death*, pp. 297 ff.

of the Infinite in history. This means that, in scientific strictness, not only are we not able to trace causal connections at certain special critical points, but in no case can we do so. The closest scrutiny of the preceding finite stage simply refuses to yield a sufficient cause. In nature, the connection seems to us necessary only because habitual connections which we have simply found to hold as matters of fact are assumed to be necessities of thought.[1] So far, then, at least, we are not accepting in nature, as Pfleiderer claims, a principle which is denied in history. The truth is, that Pfleiderer's statement goes beyond what can be admitted as fact even in nature.[2] Certainly those who, like Pfleiderer, admit that the finite cannot be thought to be independent as to its *being*, ought to find it only rational to admit that the finite is not less dependent as to its *action;* that, as in the former case for any ultimate explanation we require continual reference to that which is more than finite, so also in all the activities of the finite more than the finite must be presupposed.

3. Unless we mean entirely to deny the reality of personality and character in man, we are bound to admit that there must be

[1] *Cf.* Lotze, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 384–85. [2] *Cf.* above, pp. 54, 55; 84–86.

some difference between God's immanence in nature and his immanence in man.[1] For if the personality and character of men are accounted real, a view of the immanence of God which might be wholly satisfactory as applied to external nature might be wholly unsatisfactory as applied to men. We should be obliged to ask with Lotze: "Where in this being is the cause of the development of the moral world, where that whence proceeds the distinction of good and evil? If we will not — relapsing into the old antagonism — either externally ground the moral world on a nature originally given, or assume that the two separate roots coëxist without any bond of union in a Supreme Being that we call One, no other choice remains than either to include the Good in the cycle of natural phenomena, or Nature in the accomplishment of Good. I cannot for a moment doubt that the latter alternative is alone permissible: all being, all that we call mode and form, thing and event, the whole sum of Nature, can be nothing else than the condition for the realization of Good, can be as it is only because thus in it the infinite

[1] *Cf.* A. W. Jackson, *James Martineau, A Biography and Study*, pp. 182 ff.; 415 ff.

worth of the Good manifested itself."[1] That is, we must take account not only of the world of nature but of the world of human nature; and the conception of law, that is, of the consistency of the purpose of the Infinite, must be broad enough to include under it not only nature but all aspects of human nature, especially its ethical interests. The theory which Pfleiderer defends, strictly interpreted as he would interpret it, admits no such difference between God's immanence in nature and his immanence in man. But is not the very significance of history the revelation of personality and of character, not the mere unfolding of a predestined order? For whom, it must be asked, is this unfolding, if personality and character are denied? Any theory may well be questioned that so removes the significance from history.

4. If it is admitted that other persons are a significant and effective part of our environment, and if God is recognized as in any sense a real personality, it would seem impossible to deny that, in the case of the individual man, God may be at least as significant and effective a part of his environment as another man.[2] No doubt it is not intended

[1] *Op. cit.*, I, p. 396. [2] *Cf.* Pfleiderer. See above, p. 71.

that we should be able in any given case precisely to analyze out the human and the divine. Since character — our own choosing — is the aim, God's relation to us here must not be obtrusive. There is a definite moral reason for the obscurity which here prevails. And yet, in our ultimate thinking upon things, and in any long retrospect either of our own life or of history, we may find quite sufficient reason for belief in a real historical contact of God with men. And we ought not to forget, further, that in any broad view of evolution it would seem as rational to admit God in a developing environment as in the developing germ.[1]

5. A strict mechanical theory, moreover, would not leave even so much as Pfleiderer wishes to leave of religion. For if in a given historical connection there appears only what is necessarily involved in what the man himself is, then there *is* no divine element at all, except such as is implied in God's expression of himself in the constitution of the man, and never is. There is, therefore, no "other" with whom even in the most immanent way there can be communion. That is, if God appears only in what men are in their own natures,

[1] *Cf.* above, pp. 81 and 93.

which would be in a strictly immanent way, he never appears as "another" than themselves, and all talk of religion as a communion with another—with God—is impossible. Unless then one is prepared to deny transcendence in any sense of God, and so end in the blankest and most irreligious and characterless pantheism—making God responsible equally and indifferently for everything in the world—it would seem *difficult to deny some element of transcendence even in what we call the immanent action of God in the soul.* There must be "another," in order to have a religion. It may be doubted whether this has always been recognized by the newer theologians in their use of the word immanence. In truth, are we not all, of all schools, really tacitly assuming—and must we not—in our ideas of immanence, that God underlies all beings and events everywhere *as more than they all*, and only as such gives them their places in what we *call* the causal connection; and thus are implying in the so-called immanence itself a real and necessary transcendence? If such transcendence is denied, the only religion logically left is Positivism. Are the deniers of all transcendence ready to accept such an outcome?

CHAPTER VIII

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE

I. AS CONCERNS THE NEW TESTAMENT

Of the mainly intellectual influences on theology, the most important must be that of historical criticism, for Christianity is, and claims to be, preëminently a historical religion. The general outcome of historical and literary criticism so far as it concerns the New Testament is certainly thought to be reassuring,—to have given us stronger and better reasons for our faith in Christ. Very few, probably, would question that Christianity as a historical religion is in a far more defensible position now than sixty-five years ago It would not be at all true to say that traditional views concerning the New Testament have not changed within this period; they have changed,—greatly and on many points. Doubtless, too, the battle in the New Testament field is not done, as the determined efforts still making

in many quarters to eliminate the miraculous plainly show; with this question we have already dealt. But, taking full account of all questions that in any fairness may be considered still open, it cannot be doubted that the result of the constant discussion since Strauss' *Life of Jesus*, in 1835, has been to make clearer than ever the solid historical basis of Christianity, and the incomparable position of Christ as the supreme person of history. And with the meaning of this latter fact for theology we shall have later to deal.

The question that is just now of seeming greater concern to the Church is the application of essentially the same historical and literary criticism to the books of the Old Testament. And, if it is the business of a theologian to recognize especially the difficulties of his own times, the theologian of to-day cannot avoid facing with peculiar care the problem of the so-called higher criticism of the Old Testament. This is the more necessary, since any considerable change in the view of the Bible, such as seems involved in the higher criticism, must make a most important and delicate transition for the Protestant Church, because of the place it has always given to the Bible. Indeed,

this question means so much to the Church to-day that it seems impossible to discuss it adequately without giving it what may easily seem disproportionate attention.

II. DEFINITION OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM

It is unfortunate that in the early stages of higher criticism in America, for particular reasons, it came to be associated, in the minds of many, with a rather bitter and arrogant spirit; and it is even more unfortunate that, for many more, for other special reasons, it was identified with the most extreme results of an *a priori* anti-supernaturalistic school. It ought to be clear to every one by this time, however, that higher criticism is a method, not results; and that, like the historical or scientific method anywhere, it will give sound results only as the investigator is competently furnished for his particular inquiry, is modest in face of the facts, is free from prejudice, and is of genuine soundness of judgment. It is manifestly as unfair and unwise to discard all higher criticism as such, because its methods have been by many abused, as it would be to set aside historical and literary criticism as a whole — of which

the higher criticism of the Old Testament is only an example—for the same reason. One cannot wonder that there has been some impatience on the part of scholars with the persistent misunderstanding of this fundamental distinction recognized everywhere else, and with the consequent berating of the whole method because the results reached by some in the use of the method have not been justified.

Positively, higher criticism may be defined as a careful historical and literary study of a book to determine its unity, age, authorship, literary form, and reliability. In the determination of these problems, as Professor Briggs has pointed out,[1] account is taken of the historical references contained in the book, of the style of the book, of the opinions expressed in it, of the citations made in it, and of the testimony (or lack of testimony) to this book found in other books of acknowledged authority, where some reference might be expected. The higher criticism of a book is thus, in the main, simply a painstaking study of the book itself, to get at the facts about it. The inquiry in its entirety is evidently wholly legitimate and ought

[1] *The Study of Holy Scripture*, p. 95 ff.

to be of value when applied to the books of the Bible. Any one who undertakes such an inquiry, *whatever his results*, whether such as to deny or such as to confirm traditional opinion, is a higher critic. In its purity, then, it is to be noted, the higher criticism of the Old Testament is simply an honest inductive study of the facts about the historical revelation of God to determine, just as in a truly scientific study of nature, how God actually did proceed, not how he *must* have proceeded. It stands squarely opposed to the *a priori* attitude on either side—both to the *a priori* abstract supernaturalism which assumes that a record of the divine revelation must be without touch of human error, and to the *a priori* abstract anti-supernaturalism which assumes that the supernatural is impossible. The business of the higher criticism is not with *a priori* theories of any kind, but with an inductive study of the facts. To such an inductive study, however thorough, no reasonable objection can be made. And, so far as the results reached by the critic are affected by *a priori* assumption, they are not properly critical results at all, and therefore not fairly chargeable to higher criticism as such. The defense

of higher criticism is not the defense of such results. This chapter, certainly, is not intended as a defense of any anti-supernaturalistic criticism.

III. THE INEVITABLENESS OF THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is difficult to understand how any one who knows at all what modern scholarship means can question the legitimacy and final desirability of the higher criticism of the Old Testament as now defined. And, conservatives and radicals alike, we ought all at least squarely to face the inevitableness for our time of just such a study of the Old Testament. Nothing can prevent men raising these questions concerning the Old Testament, and they must be answered, as best they may be, in view of all available evidence. The only wise policy for the Christian Church is the frankest and fullest facing of the facts, without timidity and without prejudice.

It should not be forgotten by the older generation that the younger generation, as they study the Old Testament, are conscious of difficulties that were very little felt even

thirty years ago. Three subjects now come into the early education of a child which formerly had little or no place — natural science, history, and comparative literature; and each one of these studies has its own atmosphere and raises its own difficulties in Old Testament study; so that, far more commonly than is generally supposed, even children are raising essentially critical questions. The scientific and historical and literary spirit is more or less tangibly felt by them, and questions thus arise involuntarily for the younger generation that were not at all felt by the older. More often than parents know, the child is asking: Are there any such things as miracles? Is this account in Genesis like what I learned in physical geography? Are these narratives real history? are not these stories essentially like the Greek ones in my reader?

It is not too much to say that few men who really feel the spirit of their generation can make a careful comparative study of the Old Testament books as wholes, and not be driven to raise questions that can be answered only by criticism. The great body of the Church are able to shut their eyes to these difficulties, simply because they have

always read their Bible so in bits that they really do not know the phenomena which it contains. For the real student of the Bible, criticism is a help, not a hindrance, to his faith.

Let no one imagine, then, that these questions of the higher criticism can be evaded. For the sake of the younger generation, and especially for the best trained portion of it, it must be made unmistakably clear that the Bible itself warrants no view which ignores the human and progressive element in the Bible, or looks on all its parts as of equal divinity and value. Dr. George Adam Smith probably does not overstate the truth when he says that if one person is likely to suffer shipwreck through the employment of the higher criticism, the faith of ten will break down—is breaking down—for lack of the very help it would bring.

The historical and literary criticism of the Old Testament, in fact, is inevitable simply because of a wider knowledge, which it would be the height of folly for the Church to ignore. Principal Fairbairn's statement on this point is comprehensive and convincing, and may well suffice. "If scientific scholarship be legitimate, the higher criticism

cannot be forbidden—the two have simply moved *pari passu*. Hebrew language became another thing in the hands of Gesenius from what it had been in the hands of Parkhurst; the genius of Ewald made it a still more living and mobile and significant thing. The discoveries in Egypt and Mesopotamia have made forgotten empires and lost literatures rise out of their graves to elucidate Hebrew history and literature. A more intimate knowledge of Oriental man and nature, due to personal acquaintance with them, has qualified scholars the better to read and understand the Semitic mind. A more accurate knowledge of ancient versions, combined with a more scientific archæology, and a clearer insight into the intellectual tendencies and religious methods of the old world, especially in their relation to literary activity and composition, has enabled the student to apply new and more certain canons to all that concerns the formation of books and texts. The growth of skilled interpretation, exercised and illustrated in many fields, has accustomed men to the study of literature and history together, showing how the literature lived through the people, and the people were affected

by the literature; and so has trained men to read with larger eyes the books and peoples of the past. With so many new elements entering into sacred scholarship, it is impossible that traditional views and traditional canons should remain unaffected. If ever anything was inevitable through the progress of science, it was the birth of the higher criticism."[1]

Must not a large Christian faith see in this wide movement of scholarship a genuine providential leading, and count the constructive higher criticism which has accompanied it not only inevitable, but desirable?

IV. DANGERS IN THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW VIEW OF THE BIBLE

There are, no doubt, dangers for the Church, as in every transition, in passing over from the older view of the Bible to that involved in the critical position. There is danger, in the first place, of over-emphasis on the critical and intellectual. So far as the spiritual life is concerned, all these critical processes are only means to higher

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 503.

ends. The results of criticism may be of great value to the spiritual life; the processes themselves have in general no place in directly religious teaching. There is danger, too, of extravagant reaction from traditional views, in a dogmatic assurance as to details of criticism that cannot be insisted upon, and especially, through confusing critical with radical positions, in the direction of a denial of the supernatural altogether. As in every period of transition, too, there is the danger of the relaxing of older ideas and obligations while the newer are not yet firmly grasped. This only emphasizes the need of a constant constructive criticism, that shall interpret the critical results for the spiritual life, always replacing the old with the better new, putting fuller richer meaning into old formulas. We are not to destroy but to fulfil. Perhaps no better example of such fearless but genuinely constructive criticism can be given than Professor George Adam Smith's treatment of the Minor Prophets in his *The Book of the Twelve Prophets.*

In this entire transition, there is great need of patience and charity for a considerable time. It is not strange that, with the

widely different points of view of those who have undertaken higher critical investigations and with the contradictory statements about higher criticism, many should be honestly confused concerning the real issue, and feel that all higher criticism is an attack on the Bible itself. For the great body of the Church, probably, a view of inspiration has gone unchallenged, which the Bible nowhere claims for itself, and which simply cannot consist with the known facts about the Bible. Persons cherishing such a view will be likely to feel at first that, in losing their unauthorized theory of the Bible, they are losing the Bible itself. We are all likely somewhere to identify things which are very precious to us with their accidental accompaniments. In the meantime, Christian men must have faith in one another's Christian motives and character, and cultivate an honest tolerance. We are all seeking the same ultimate goal. And let us not judge by phrases merely, whether conservative or radical. What we seek is neither the old as old nor the new as new, but God's own truth, old or new.

No doubt, even for the ordinary Christian, who turns to the Bible simply for guid-

ance and inspiration, it is true,—to quote the wise words of another—that "the view here presented will necessitate more trouble and more care in the study of the Bible. We can no longer take each verse as in itself a complete and definite proof-text on the matter it refers to. We must consider the context, and the time in which the writer lived, and the circumstances under which he wrote. We must balance one part of Scripture with another. We must recognize that the Old Testament teaching is in parts lower than that of the New. We must build our beliefs less on isolated phrases or texts, and more on the general spirit of the Bible. And for all this there will be needed more thoughtfulness, more suspension of judgment, more modesty, more study, more prayer."[1] But this only makes almost impossible the lazy and unspiritual use of the Bible, and in the end must prove a gain rather than a loss. It means a more genuinely spiritual method in spiritual things; for, as Drummond says, "truth never becomes truth until it has been earned."

[1] J. P. Smyth, *How God Inspired the Bible*, p. 208. This book is one of the best popular presentations of its subject known to the writer.

V. GENERAL RESULTS OF THE CRITICAL STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is evident that we cannot dogmatize as to the minute details of the literary analysis of the Old Testament,—that there is room for difference of opinion here as in the details of any science. In all probability, the tendency to extreme and minute analysis has well-nigh reached its climax; and many individual theories in reference to brief passages might fall to the ground without disturbing the larger results of criticism in which there is general agreement.

No doubt, too, it is possible that some more general conclusions, now seeming very probable, may with more light be changed; the problem is often very complex. It seems probable to the writer that in certain cases more weight than has been must be given, for example, to the evidence of literary form and to the considerable degree of unity the books have in their present form; as some of Professor Moulton's work in the *Modern Reader's Bible* naturally suggests.

Archæological research, too, may possibly still alter some conclusions. Though it is to be noted that Driver—certainly not

given to rash statements — feels warranted in saying in the preface to the last edition of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament:* "The attempt to refute the conclusions of criticism by means of archæology has signally failed. The archæological discoveries of recent years have indeed been of singular interest and value: they have thrown a flood of light, sometimes as surprising as it was unexpected, upon many a previously dark and unknown region of antiquity. But, in spite of the ingenious hypotheses which have been framed to prove the contrary, they have revealed nothing which is in conflict with the generally accepted conclusions of critics."[1]

Changes in critical conclusions are more likely to come, if at all, from the discernment of new and simpler hypotheses to account for the facts found, where the hypothesis now accepted is perhaps unnecessarily complex. Such changes have already taken place in the case of some of the briefer Old Testament books.

Most important of all, as has been already indicated, a clear line must be drawn between the results of a truly scientific

[1] *Introduction*, p. xviii.

inductive literary and historical inquiry, and results reached because of an *a priori* anti-supernaturalistic point of view. The latter results cannot be called critical results.

But, taking all these considerations into account, it is to be noted that the higher criticism of the Old Testament, though it has but lately come into prominence, has been going on for more than two hundred years; and it can hardly be said that there is reason to expect any great change in what Canon Driver calls "the generally accepted conclusions of critics."

Summarily stated, these conclusions taken altogether give a different conception than that held by the traditional view, of the dates, order, authors, and mode of composition of the books of the Old Testament; do not put all parts upon the same level, but rather emphasize growth in the religious ideas, institutions, and legislation of Israel, and hold that the earlier prophets preceded most of this development; and recognize clearly the constant human element in the book. To particularize upon a single point—mode of composition. From a careful study of the books themselves, there has come to be general agreement among the critics

that many books of the Old Testament in their present form are not the work of a single writer in the modern sense, but rather compilations whose main documents can still be made out. In the case of the Hexateuch, for example, it is held that four writers from 900 B.C. to 500 B.C., using ancient material and the best traditions accessible, aim to retrace the history of God's leading of his people, to bring out its moral and religious lessons. They do this from somewhat different points of view, with somewhat different aims, emphasizing somewhat different aspects. These accounts are later compiled, probably in stages, and edited with some later additions, that is, very much as legislation is in our own day.[1]

Now can the Christian Church adjust itself to the changed point of view involved in these general critical conclusions? In the first place, it has, of course, to be said that, so far as these conclusions are true, the Church must adjust itself to them. The questions are questions of scholarship, and can be settled only in the field of scholar-

[1] See the careful discussions accompanying the Oxford *Hexateuch*, by J. E. Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby, for the fullest presentation of the questions involved in the literary analysis of the Old Testament books.

ship. But has the Church any real reason to fear the results here indicated as the final general outcome of the critical study of the Old Testament? I cannot believe it.

VI. REASONS FOR CONFIDENCE IN THE ABIDING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Certain considerations in the reason of the case may well assure us. The really true and valuable, in the long run, cannot suffer from the closest scrutiny and from all possible light. It would be only lack of faith in the Bible that could lead us to seek to withdraw it from such inquiry.

Moreover, since Christianity is a historical religion, if we believe in its truth at all, we must believe that such persistent and painstaking historical researches as those especially of the last sixty years must help us to more accurate and illuminating statements. Theology can be certain that the assured results of patient investigation, because they will show us more perfectly the method that God actually did take in his revelation of himself to men, will bring, not disaster, but great enrichment to theology. His ways are higher than our ways, and his

thoughts than our thoughts. Some of the adjustments required will in the time of transition no doubt seem difficult and even threatening; but it is certain that, so far as we are able actually to find God's way—and this is the sole final result of criticism—it will be *better* than our way.

It is singular, too, that, while scholars of every complexion now accept without misgiving the literary analysis of the synoptic Gospels having to do with the very center of our faith, any should feel that vital interests are at stake in a similar analysis of the Pentateuch.

It is hardly less singular that so many should feel that decisions as to the authorship of Old Testament books are vital to Christian faith. Professor Briggs says broadly, for example: "It may be regarded as the certain result of the science of the higher criticism that Moses did not write the Pentateuch or Job; Ezra did not write the Chronicles, Ezra or Nehemiah; Jeremiah did not write the Kings or Lamentations; David did not write the Psalter, but only a few of the Psalms; Solomon did not write the Song of Songs or Ecclesiastes, and only a portion of the Proverbs; Isaiah did not

write half of the book that bears his name."[1] Now if one accepts fully this statement of Professor Briggs, what has he done? He has simply set aside, on evidence that seems conclusive to most modern scholars, the common *Jewish* tradition as to the authorship of these books; for Professor Briggs can say in the same connection: "Higher criticism has not contravened any decision of any Christian Council, or any creed of any church, or any statement of Scripture itself."

Even more carefully and comprehensively, Dr. Driver says in his *Introduction:* "It is not the case that critical conclusions, such as those expressed in the present volume, are in conflict either with the Christian creeds or with the articles of Christian faith. Those conclusions affect not the *fact* of revelation, but only its *form.* They help to determine the stages through which it passed, the different phases which it assumed, and the process by which the record of it was built up. They do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They imply no change in respect to the Divine attributes

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 287.

revealed in the Old Testament; no change in the lessons of human duty to be derived from it; no change as to the general position (apart from the interpretation of particular passages) that the Old Testament points forward prophetically to Christ. That both the religion of Israel itself, and the record of its history embodied in the Old Testament, are the work of men whose hearts have been touched and minds illumined, in different degrees, by the Spirit of God, is manifest: but the recognition of this truth does not decide the question of the author by whom, or the date at which, particular parts of the Old Testament were committed to writing; nor does it determine the precise literary character of a given narrative or book."[1]

Moreover, the books are just what they are, whoever wrote them; their moral and spiritual quality is unchanged. Probably no modern New Testament scholar believes that Paul wrote Hebrews; but the characteristics of the book are not changed by this change of opinion as to authorship. We have still less reason for feeling that vital interests are at stake in decisions as to

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. viii.

the authorship of Old Testament books. Does the value of the fifty-first psalm depend on whether David wrote it? Is the second part of the book of Isaiah less uplifting, if another than Isaiah is its author? The conclusions of the critics ought rather to mean to us, that Israel was even richer than we thought, that there were a number of other great prophetic spirits all down its history worthy to be put side by side with Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

There are other difficulties more serious than these that seem to have appealed most to the popular imagination; but taking full account of all the difficulties which can reasonably be urged as involved in the critical position, we may still count upon the *unique and abiding significance of the Old Testament.*

For, in the first place, whatever the critical results, it remains true that the Old Testament is the one great *moral* book of antiquity. It is not a mere collection of moral aphorisms, but shows the developing moral sense everywhere, in everything. Character is really the supreme interest in this book. Among all the ancient peoples, in truth, only the Jews have the modern sense of sin,

and the Bible is in this particular the only ancient book with a really modern tone. Compared with these sober Jews, even the gifted Greeks are but playing children in their sense of sin and character. Speaking solely as a philosopher, Lotze says that, alone among all the religions of the world, Judaism and Christianity stand out as predominantly ethical; the rest are all predominantly "cosmological."[1] This clear and constantly developing ethical tone felt in all portions of this ancient Hebrew literature—in its telling of the earliest race traditions, in its history, and in its poetry, as really as in its prophets—this marks out the Bible distinctly from all other ancient books. And this fact has a divine cause; it cannot be accounted for by land or climate or race—many other peoples shared all these—God himself is in some peculiar way back of this people. Whatever the critical results, this fact abides.

In a similar sense, the Bible is the one great *religious* book of antiquity. Religious books in abundance of course the ancient world had, and we need not underestimate any of them. But, for the actual life of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, Book VIII, Chap. IV.

civilization of this nineteenth century, only the Bible is of prime significance. These Old Testament writers have been, in fact, among all the ancient writers, the world's great spiritual and religious seers. To the one great connected historical development which the world has seen, and which culminates in what we call modern civilization, there have been three — and only three — great contributions from the ancient world — Greek, Roman, and Hebrew. The Greeks have been our teachers in art, and literature, and philosophy; the Romans, in law; and the Hebrews, in religion. And in even higher degree than we owe art and literature to the Greeks, and law to the Romans, do we owe religion to the Jews. The Jews have given us the beginnings of our religion, certain to triumph. Here alone, among the ancient peoples, was the highest God-consciousness; only here, clearly and unmistakably, the one God of character. From the Jews came the only effective and thoroughly ethical monotheism. Only here, too, were those deep insights into the forgiveness and love of God, almost anticipating Christianity. The very greatest of the other nations only dimly grope after what is here the life of many of the people—the heart of

it, and the joy of it. Give, for example, to the twenty-third Psalm the latest date conceivable, and then contrast still the pathetic uncertain groping of a Socrates with its calm, confident faith. The Jews have shared with the world their sense of God. Here in this ancient literature, whatever the critical results, is contained the record of the preëminent meetings of God with men, down to the time of Christ. This fact abides.

Orr, therefore, justly says: "The biblical conception is separated from every other by its monotheistic basis, its unique clearness, its organic unity, its moral character, and its teleological aim. It does not matter for the purposes of this argument what dates we assign to the books of the Old Testament in which these views are found—whether we attribute them, with the critics, to the age of the prophets, or to any other. These views are at least there many centuries before the Christian age began, and they are found nowhere else than on the soil of Israel. This is the singular fact the critic has to face, and we cannot profess to wonder that, impartially studying it, voices should be heard from the midst of the advanced school itself, unhesitatingly declaring, Date your books when you will, this

religion is not explicable save on the hypothesis of Revelation."[1]

There are involved in the two claims already made for the Bible, two others mutually complementary. The Bible is, in peculiar degree, the record, on the one hand, of the progressive seeking of men after God, and, on the other, of the progressive self-revelation of God to men. If the line of the world's religious development is preëminently through the Jew, then here, most clearly of all, may the mutual seeking of God and men be traced. And the two conceptions belong together, if there is a God at all. The *progressive seeking of these old Hebrew seers after God* is full of lessons for the whole period of the growth of the kingdom of God. We must learn through others. And we cannot let this great line of the Hebrew prophets die without great loss to ourselves. As the modern philosopher emphasizes the imperative need of the careful study of the history of philosophy, so, with even greater reason, must the religious man emphasize the need of thorough acquaintance with these greatest of all the ancient seekers after God. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah deserve a place in modern thought which they have

[1] *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 15.

never yet had even in the church; and it is the modern historical study that must chiefly help to give them this place.

But the Old Testament would not live as it has if we could not believe that it was also and chiefly the record of *God's progressive self-revelation to men*. We need to know and to be able to trace God's dealings with men. And just at this most vital of all points, we shall see that critical study has been a positive help. Here are lessons, no otherwise to be learned, of the costliness of character beyond all comparison, of the tremendous earnestness of God in his redemptive endeavor, and of the unspeakable love and patience of God as he guides his people on toward righteousness and himself. This question of the genuine objective self-revelation of God in the history of Israel is of such prime importance as to justify an extended and careful statement by Professor George Adam Smith, written, it should be noted, frankly from the critical point of view:

"Israel's monotheism became indisputable in the centuries from the eighth to the sixth B. C., the period of the great Assyrian invasions. Before the irresistible Assyrian advance the tribal gods of Syria—always identified with

the stability of their peoples—went down one after another, and history became reduced to a uniformity analogous to that of nature in the Semitic desert. It was in meeting the problems which this state of affairs excited that the genius of Israel rose to a grasp of the world as a whole, and to faith in a sovereign Providence. This Providence was not the military Empire that leveled the world; he was not any of the gods of Assyria. He was Israel's own tribal Deity, who was known to the world but as the God of the few hills on which his nation hardly maintained herself. Fallen she was as low as her neighbors; taunted she was by them and by her adversaries, to prove that Jehovah could save her any more than the gods of Hamath or Damascus, or the Philistines, had saved them: yet both on the eve of her fall, and in her deepest abasement, Israel affirmed that Jehovah reigned; that he was Lord of the hosts of heaven and earth; that Assyria was only a tool in his hand.

"Why did Israel alone rise to this faith? Why did no other of the gods of the Assyrian clans, Baals and Molochs, take advantage of the opportunity? Why should the people of Jehovah alone see a universal Providence

in the disasters which they shared, and ascribe it to him?

"The answer to these questions is the beginning of Syria's supreme rank in the religious history of mankind. It is writ, beyond all misreading, in the prophets of the time and in the history of Israel which preceded the prophets. To use their own phrase, the prophets saw *Jehovah exalted in righteousness*. And this was not their invention: it had been implicit in Israel's conception of Jehovah from a very early age. In what are confessedly ancient documents, Jehovah is the cause of Israel's being, of the union of their tribes, of their coming to Palestine, of their instinct to keep separate from other peoples, even when they do not seem to have been conscious of a reason why. But from the first this influence upon them was ethical. It sifted the great body of custom and law which was their common heritage with all other Semitic tribes; it added to this both mercy and justice, mitigating the cruelty of some laws, where innocent or untried life was in danger, but strenuously enforcing others, where custom, greed or tyranny had introduced carelessness with regard to the most sacred interests of life. We may not always be sure of the dates of these

laws, but it is past all doubt that the ethical agent at work in them was at work in Israel from the beginning, and was the character, the justice, the holiness of Jehovah. But at first it was not in law so much as in the events of the people's history that this character impressed them. They knew all along that he had found them, chosen them, brought them to the land, borne with them, forgiven them, redeemed them in his love and in his pity, so that, though it were true that no law had come to them from him, the memory of all he had been to them, the influence of himself in their history, would have remained their distinction among the peoples. Even in that rude time his grace had been mightier than his law.

"On such evidence we believe the assertion of the prophets, that what had made Israel distinct from her kinsfolk, and endowed her alone with the solution of the successive problems of history and with her high morality, was the knowledge of a real Being and intercourse with him. This is what Revelation means."[1]

Moreover, *Christianity itself needs this Old Testament revelation;* for, if Christ is the

[1] *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 31-33.

true and supreme revelation of God, and God is the same God, we shall inevitably argue that there must have been some similar previous revelation leading up to Christ. The Old Testament makes more, not less, credible the Christian revelation. The culminating revelation in Christ, therefore, does not make unnecessary the earlier stages.

The Old Testament has peculiar meaning for us in still another respect. The individual life, even as the physical, repeats in some measure the stages of the life of the race. What embryology reveals concerning the body, the Old Testament gives concerning the religious life. In some form we pass through these experiences of Israel and know these steps. *The Old Testament is our own life writ large.* It meets our varied moods and reinterprets our individual life in a wonderful way. We know what "Old Testament experiences" mean. We are not always at the stage of Christ, we are not always prepared wholly to understand or value him. The Old Testament proves often a real preparation for him; and, in this sense too, becomes our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.

But, in one respect, our age least of all can spare the Old Testament. Under the

influence of the historical method of study now everywhere prevalent, and of the idea of evolution in particular, this age feels, as no preceding age has, that *for any adequate appreciation of the higher forms there must be study of the lower.* The lower forms, it is seen, are simpler, and in them the central phenomena are more easily grasped. Following through these earlier forms, we can trace the successive stages; we can see what falls away, what develops, what is essential; we can see the changing emphasis, understand the growing complexity, and appreciate the new as it appears; and the laws of the development become clear. If this biological method is ever of importance, it must be so, most of all, in the study of the religious life of the race. So strong, certainly, is the influence of the historical method in our times that, in our study of Christianity, we should conjecturally reconstruct a previous revelation, if we did not have its record in the Old Testament. But now in the Old Testament we are able to retrace the most important steps in the working out of character and faith in the world. Especially from this point of view may one say with Sanday: "The full rediscovering and full appropriat-

ing of the Old Testament are the special problems of our day."[1] We cannot spare the Old Testament. But obviously, no such importance attaches to the study of the forms after the highest have been reached.

These considerations should suffice to convince a man who believes in a God at all that the unique and abiding significance of the Old Testament is not put in jeopardy by any possible results of critical study.

VII. GAINS FROM THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

But if the historical and literary criticism of the Old Testament has inevitably attended a great providential movement of scholarship, Christian faith ought to see that this study not only has not destroyed the unique significance of the Old Testament, but has been a positive help to its spiritual appreciation, appropriation, and preaching. This, in spite of unsolved difficulties, I believe it will increasingly prove to be. What are the gains which even now are clearly discernible as the result of the critical study of the Old Testament? They may be grouped under three

[1] *The Oracles of God*, p. 118.

heads: general gains, chiefly intellectual; gains in view of the fact that Christianity is biblical; and gains in view of the fact that Christianity is historical.

1. *General Gains chiefly Intellectual.*—And first, criticism relieves of the burden of the false *a priori* theories of inspiration. We shall come to be grateful that this patient, critical study of the Bible has shown us that the Bible itself makes no such claims of errorless statement on all possible points as our *a priori* theories claimed for it; and we shall so be guarded from serious misapprehensions of the real purpose of the Bible that have naturally led to its rejection by many. Such attacks as those of Robert Ingersoll, for example, get their whole point from the assumptions of an *a priori* theory of what the Bible must be, if it is to be a divine revelation.

In the second place, the literary analysis of the Old Testament books has relieved of many minor difficulties, that must be felt on the old hypothesis. As soon as the ancient mode of composition, especially of the historical books, is understood, and it is seen that we often have in the present form of a book only the skilful weaving together of

several accounts more or less parallel, phenomena quite inexplicable on the theory of a single authorship are easily accounted for and occasion no difficulty. So repetitions, lack of classification, minor inconsistencies, different styles and points of view, find their natural explanation; and more serious difficulties, as especially that of the relation of the Hexateuch to other books of the Old Testament, particularly the Prophets, are relieved.

Moreover, it is not too much to say that this analysis, especially of the Hexateuch, has even helped historic credibility (1) "by showing," as Professor Briggs says, "that we have four parallel narratives instead of the single narrative of the traditional theory; and (2) by tracing these narratives to their sources in the more ancient documents buried in them." [1]

At the same time, the evidence of the more minute study of the Old Testament seems to be that it was not the plan of God miraculously to provide for the Hebrews historical or scientific knowledge hidden from other peoples; they are left to use the best available knowledge on these points, and to employ the ordinary methods of historical

[1] *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, p. 3.

composition prevalent in their time. Now this seems at first a real loss in our estimate of the Bible. But this seeming loss may become a genuine gain, since it keeps us from an abuse of the Bible, and forbids us to mistake the secondary and incidental for the primary and essential, and only brings out into stronger light the true providential function of Israel and its literature — not to teach the world science or history, but to help men to find God and to be found of God. And this great, supremely great, contribution is here just the same, though you criticize the historical; perhaps is even more clear because you recognize the other limitations which these writers share with their times, and still see, side by side with those limitations, this surpassing sense of God, beyond their times and in much beyond ours also. This has just one natural explanation — God's own self-revealing. This is much more than an intellectual result.

2. *Gains in View of the Fact that Christianity is Biblical.*—If Christianity is really built upon a biblical foundation, it can hardly be questioned that anything that helps to a completer mastery of the Bible, to a more perfect intellectual understanding of how it came

to be and of what it is,—and it is exactly this that the higher criticism claims to give—in the end is bound to help to its best spiritual use. Christianity is a rational religion, and makes its appeal to the entire man. The truth, only the truth, and the whole truth about the Bible must be finally best for Christianity.

Nor is it true to say that we can safely ignore critical results as of no essential significance. The one great lesson of scientific investigation in every field has been, that we can safely ignore no element of truth anywhere, for we are in no position to tell beforehand how important it may prove. If Christianity is biblical at all, we cannot know the Bible too well from any point of view. That the minute historical and literary study of the Bible, involved in higher criticism, has greatly increased our knowledge of the phenomena of the Bible at many points is beyond question. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that the difficulties of the higher criticism would largely vanish for the church if its membership could be persuaded to make careful first-hand inductive book-studies of the Bible, book by book.

3. *Gains in View of the Fact that Chris-*

tianity is Historical.—Because Christianity is a historical religion, it is also certain to gain from the critical study of the Old Testament. If our generation is more strongly marked than any other by the historical spirit, in just the degree in which Christianity is historical, this generation should be able to have a better appreciation of Christianity and a stronger grip upon a historical presentation of the revelation of God, such as critical study has made possible. This very spirit makes us feel more than ever the appeal of *realities* too. We are asking everywhere "what really happened." We wish to be able to reproduce in every inquiry the actual historical setting. Moreover, it has become more clear than ever to our generation that the greatest moral appeal must always come through *persons;* that the one great road to character is not through intellectual formulizing, nor through constant moralizing, but through association with the best—catching their spirit.

Now, every one of these appeals—of the historical, the real, and the personal—felt so strongly by our generation, is made more strong by the results of criticism. We can trace the historical development of the revelation of God with a certainty never before

attainable; we can place before our imaginations the actual historical situation in the different periods as no preceding age could do; and we can make the Bible more intensely personal than ever. We can know the precise situation which confronted Amos and Hosea, for example; we can feel their problems and trace their motives, and we are drawn by their spirit as never before. The appeal of the personal life here is immensely strengthened. And if it is the incarnate idea that really counts in life, there must be great gain finally from critical results for the personal spiritual appropriation and preaching of the Old Testament. It is within the truth to say that the greater part of the prophets has been a sealed book to the church at large. Thanks to critical study, it need be so no longer. How much ought it to mean to the church to make to live again this great line of the Hebrew prophets!

All this means that a *real historical interpretation* of the Old Testament—the only true interpretation—is possible to our generation to a degree never before true. We can know more certainly just what the revelation meant to those to whom it first came. And if we believe that the Bible contains a real revela-

tion from God, and care to find out just what that revelation is—God's own lesson, his work—and are not contented to read our own ideas into the record, we shall thank God for the greater historical light of these later days.

As certainly, too, as God is revealed in act, so certainly does the greater ability to trace the actual historical succession of events in the Old Testament mean great additional *light upon the actual steps in God's self-revelation*, and so help us better to know God himself in the patient loving adaptation of his redemptive leading of his people. The history itself—this is the real and primary revelation, not the record. Every step, therefore, in the unraveling of the actual process of God's dealing with Israel is a direct religious contribution. We reach the certainty of God not in words, but in the facts of the historical process itself. God is in it, we say. This, these prophetic spirits in Israel first discerned. And, facing the facts again through them, and in some respects more perfectly than they, we share their vision of God and catch their faith. Or perhaps rather, the earnestness of their faith turns our attention to the history, and then in face of the history the revelation of God is born in us as it was originally in them. "The

certainty of God is not a product of human strivings."

Here in the Old Testament we come into fellowship with the *real* God, who is the creator of the real world and acts in the real course of history. Not an imaginary God, a dream God, a God of mystic contemplation or of metaphysical speculation, but the real God of real life and history—Israel discerned. This is the glory of these books, and the secret of their sanity and permanence and power as well. To be quickened ourselves, therefore, by the faith and vision of God of these old prophetic spirits, whatever their limitations, and then to be able to see for ourselves in this history of Israel the presence of God, by his own revelation *in us*—this is the supreme office of the Old Testament; this remains, and is even strengthened by criticism. This is the self-evidence of the Old Testament —God speaking through it.

VIII. THE PRESENT POSITIVE RESULTS FOR THEOLOGY

Since theology is at its best a thoughtful statement of what religion means to us, every gain for the spiritual life from the newer study

of the Bible is a distinct gain for theology, and every change in religious feeling concerning the Bible becomes a new problem for theology. Since Christian theology, too, professes to build directly upon the self-revelation of God contained in the Bible, any important change in the conception of the Bible cannot leave theology unaffected. Once more, the peculiarly authoritative position which has been given to the Bible by Protestants makes all questions concerning it of special importance for Protestant theologians. For all these reasons, the considerations of the preceding discussion must have important bearings on Christian Protestant theology; and certain of these bearings deserve to be particularized.

1. In the first place, this exhaustive historical and literary study of the phenomena of the Bible, involved in the higher criticism, has brought out into clear prominence the one great *purpose* of the Bible, in absolute agreement with Paul's own clear statement,[1] that it is neither science nor history, but solely and simply a record of the historical self-revelation of God to a single people and so to all men, looking always to the winning of men into a character like God's. This means that even

[1] 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

in books called historical, its writers are not interested in strict scientific history at all, any more than in some other books they are interested in pure natural science; though we may well be impressed with the rare reserve and sobriety of the biblical writings even in these respects—a reserve and sobriety born of high ethical and religious views. And yet nature and history both concern these biblical writers only as revelations of God. A complete account of either lies quite outside their task. They select only those features that can be turned to religious account. They make no attempt to trace all the causal connections; they do seek to show what both nature and, especially, history *mean* for religion—how God reveals himself in them. Because they concentrated themselves upon this one task, they are the world's teachers in neither science, nor history, nor law, nor art, nor philosophy —but we all sit at their feet in religion. Even the historical writers, especially in the Old Testament, are, therefore, properly prophets, preaching from historical texts, and the Jews rightly called them so.

2. In the second place, the results of the critical study of the Bible require from theology a much fuller recognition of the principle

of *progress in revelation;* that this progress is to be seen in every part of the Old Testament —in the historical divine leading and in the recognition of it, in the prophets themselves, and in the legislative codes and institutions and ideas of the people. In particular the principle involves inevitably the relative imperfection of all the earlier stages, and makes Christ the absolute standard in the Bible as well as out of it. Even the moral and religious teachings, then, of the Old Testament are not for us finally authoritative. We believe in a progressive revelation culminating in Christ, and Christ alone thus becomes our ultimate standard by which all that precedes must be tested. We are not to expect to find the perfect revelation in the earlier stages. We are free to examine, and we must be honest and candid. No part of the Old Testament is written in the full light of the Christian revelation, and we are, therefore, free to judge the Old Testament by Christ, so far as ultimate truth is concerned. But this is very far from meaning that we can wisely do without the Old Testament, as the reasons already given for the abiding significance of the Old Testament show. Indeed, it is this very principle of the progress of revelation which enables us to

make the best use of the Old Testament. Theology never had any need to affirm any other principle for the Old Testament than this of the progress of revelation, but it has certainly not yet fully adjusted itself to this fact.

3. In the third place, this more careful biblical study is making clear, what a really spiritual view of inspiration would lead us to expect, that, with all its wonderful unity of development, there is no mechanical unity in the Bible or even in the New Testament, but that the different writers show *individual reflections* of a religious experience more or less common to them. In the New Testament this gives individual reflections of Christ. It is in this very way that we are able to approach any adequate conception of the real significance of Christ, and of that larger unity which comes from him and not from the single expression of even his greatest disciple. No one view, no single expression, can suffice. The work of Christ is deeper and broader than any single statement of it, even in Scripture. The recognition of this fact has promise, not only of a reasonable freedom for theology, but of large growth as well, and of a better appreciation of the rich-

ness of the New Testament testimony itself. And what is here said of the New Testament holds in only less degree of the Old Testament as well; and its recognition there will give a similar increased appreciation of the richness and many-sidedness of the Old Testament testimony.

4. The results of historical and literary criticism for theology, now indicated, plainly carry with them a further result. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the newer historical view of the Bible, in the nature of the case, does not allow the theologian of to-day to use the Bible in the same way as the older theologians. He must frankly confess that he does not feel free to quote indifferently from any part as of equal authority with every other. He cannot use it, as, for example, the Westminster divines used it in support of their system. Proof-texts in the old sense sink quite out of sight. Superficially, he may seem to be using the Bible much less; but a severe Bible student may at the same time be able to discern in a modest paragraph, that contains no direct biblical quotations or references, evidence of a careful comprehensive inductive study of a whole section of the biblical revelation.

The modern theologian does not believe the Bible less divine, but he finds the evidence of its divinity in other characteristics — believes the divinity shown in a different way. If he is true to the spirit of his time, his theology will certainly be even more biblical than that of his latest predecessors. But it will be so, through a profounder study of the great comprehensive trends of Scripture; through a deeper appreciation of the great periods in the divine revelation, and of the many-sidedness of the Christian truth there brought out; and through the consequent molding and permeating of his entire theology by the great fundamental principles of the kingdom of God. The older systems, with a most abundant show of proof-texts, might easily be almost wholly speculative, in the real heart of them little affected by the biblical view. Such a use of Scripture is hardly possible now. We must learn to distinguish in theology between the superficially biblical and the really biblical.

5. Once more, it is evident that the results of higher criticism mean for theology *a restatement of the doctrine of inspiration*, just because the older views were *a priori*,—not formed in full view of the actual phenomena

of the Bible. The traditional and critical views alike may agree that the Bible is to be counted in a special sense inspired. Or, as Horton puts it, "we mean by inspiration exactly those qualities and characteristics which are the marks or notes of the Bible." The simple question is, What are those qualities? We believe God did reveal himself; how did he actually proceed? The answer can be given only by an inductive study of the facts about the Bible. Exactly such a study the higher criticism professes to give, and a portion of its answer has already been indicated.

Beyond this, it may be added that such a study makes clear that the Bible itself assumes that the original revelation is in God's actual historical dealing with the people in act; that the Bible is thus strictly a *record* of revelation, rather than the primitive revelation itself; and, moreover, it is a record even more of what God did, than of what he said. The biblical assumption everywhere is that the living God comes into touch with living men. The Bible, indeed, may perhaps be best conceived as the record of the preëminent meetings of God with men. The objective historical reality of the revelation of God to Israel is, then, distinctly asserted.

But what has been already said concerning the primary purpose of Scripture, the progress of revelation, and the individual reflections in the Bible, make it plain that this meeting of God and men, in the biblical representation of it, involves *no suppression of the human* but rather the fullest use of it. As Matheson phrases it: "Such is the leading idea of Christian inspiration—the growth of the divine through the capacities of the human." This is indeed just what the supreme interest of the Bible in character, in bringing about a real personal relation between God and man, would lead us to expect. The Bible is nowhere satisfied with a mechanical result. The statement of the most absolute truth, that meant nothing to the man who uttered it or to the others who heard it, that had not grown out of their own living experience of God, is to the Bible a result without significance. The aim is plainly, not to get certain words spoken or certain acts done, but to get righteous and godly men. God inspires, in whatever way, the life — the experience, and the man speaks or writes out of this experience. The experience is his own, necessarily limited by attainments already made.

This whole conception, forced upon us by the actual facts especially of the Old Testament, accurately corresponds with the general New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life of the believer — that no single step of the Christian life is taken by man alone, or by God alone, but always by God and man — and with the single case in which Christ distinctly asserts divine revelation to a disciple. Christ says to Peter, after his great confession: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." [1] Here it seems plain that the revelation had been a growing one, growing upon him through the days of his close association with Christ, and producing a deepening conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus. And this revelation did not save him from immediate misconception on another most important point, as the narrative goes on to show. Christ is seeking, not a mechanically errorless statement from Peter which mere dictation might have secured at any moment, but a far more costly product — to bring him to an honest personal following of Christ for what Christ is in himself,

[1] Matt. 16:17.

because of a clear conviction growing out of his own experience. And there is no shorter route to any *real* revelation, to actual moral and spiritual results.

Such a view of inspiration necessarily implies *always both human and divine elements;* for it seeks the moral and spiritual growth of men under God's education. This means, in the first place, that God *begins with Israel where they are*, as every teacher and revealer must. For there is no teaching without a corresponding learning. There is no revelation without some response, some ability to take the revelation in, some rising on the part of man to meet the truth given. So customs, forms of observance and worship, which Israel shared with other Semites, are not forthwith under revelation set aside; they are retained but regulated, purified, given new motives and sanctions, and so put on a different religious basis. This is true, for example, of feasts, of sacrifices, of circumcision, of laws. God begins where the people are.

Moreover, when one thinks what a real moral and spiritual revelation to a man means, he must see that there can be *a growing revelation only as the man grows*, as he comes little by little into that experience of life out of which

he can interpret the revelation. We recognize perfectly in reference to children that it is wholly vain to anticipate the years by telling them beforehand the deeper things of life. There comes a time when they can understand; the wisest words upon that point before that time are only words. *Any* revelation, even though it be conceived as given by absolute divine dictation, must still be put into forms of human thought and language, thought by men, and interpreted by men to men. It is impossible to avoid the human element, and if it could be avoided, the aim of all revelation — the growth of the man — would be left out.

The inspired act and word, then, must be the man's as well as God's if they are to be moral at all. Otherwise, too, we could expect no response to the revelation from others—it would fall dead and worthless; for the revealer is presumably the highest, and if the revelation means nothing even to him, still less can it come home to others. If, now, the human and divine are always really to coöperate, if the *man* is to be truly inspired, if the act and word are to be genuinely his as well as God's, then the result in each case must be limited by the man's growth, his previous experience of God

and spiritual things, his capacity to receive. The man may only get what he can.

God has, therefore, probably not at any point stepped in miraculously to get a mechanically perfect outcome, when the morally ideal result did not appear. He is not dictating ideal propositions; he is educating men. We may expect, therefore, to find in the earlier stages of Israel's training, under what men took to be God's revelation and was, imperfect conceptions of the will of God—crude morals, treasured revenge, the cursing of enemies, wars of extermination. God is not the less teaching, that men learn slowly and come slowly into character.

This view means for us too in this day, that if the Bible is to be to us a revelation, *we* must be inspired. "Unless God be heard in the soul," Fairbairn says, "he will not be found in the Word." "In revelation the living God speaks, not simply has spoken, to living man." "We come back, then, to the position that authority belongs to the Bible, not as a book, but as a revelation; and it is a revelation, not because it has been canonized, but because it contains the history of the Redeemer and our redemption."[1]

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 498, 499, 508.

This history of the Redeemer and our redemption, in all its long preparation and progress, this discussion maintains, has become more manifest, more convincing, and more appealing through historical criticism. The outcome ought to be that the Old Testament should become, not less, but more, vastly more than it has been — God brought closer to men, to history, to life; the living God in touch with living men. When we shall have garnered the full results of the critical historical and literary study of the Old Testament, we shall have an ordered and vivid conception of the progress of the divine revelation in all its parts, that will make the entire Old Testament more real, more rational, more personal, more vital, and that will consequently get a constantly deepening hold on the imagination, on the heart, and on the life. The best teaching and the best preaching of the Bible that the world has ever seen, it may well be believed, are still ahead.

Such a view of the inspiration of the Bible as has now been indicated has these decided *gains:* that it fits the highest Christian conceptions of the relation of God and men; that it makes even more real the divine element in the Bible, affirming on increasingly clear his-

torical grounds the objective reality of a unique divine revelation to Israel, and accepting, as we have already shown, the testimony of the prophetic consciousness as scientifically trustworthy; that it does not evade in the slightest degree the full human element, and is able to bring it into its conception even where plainly wrong; that it brings harmony into all God's methods, as everywhere progressive and adaptive; and especially that it brings the methods of God in the Old Testament into essential harmony with his method in the New Testament and at present, and gives thus a conception in which one may rest as justified in the face of all the facts. We shall come to be grateful that the phenomena of the Bible disclosed by patient study *compelled* us to a restatement of the doctrine of inspiration, that eliminated from it the mechanical, and brought it into full accord with the working of God in our own hearts as promised by Christ — never God alone, and never man alone, but always God and man, in a personal coöperation that means character and love.

Difference from post-Biblical Inspiration.—But just here, a single additional problem is at once suggested. Is there any difference, then, between the inspiration of the Bible, and that

of many men and many writings since? If God is still inspiring men, and revealing himself to them, why should we give a place of such unique importance to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments? These questions deserve a frank and careful answer.

Now, no doubt, we must recognize differences in inspiration in the books of the Bible itself, especially in the Old Testament. They are by no means to be put all upon the same plane, nor are all equally indispensable. This was the clear and strong opinion of even the Jews from the first. And we are certainly not to deny the work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men since biblical times, inspiring them and making them mediums of revelation to others.

But all this contains no reason for questioning the statement, previously quoted from Lotze, that "there is nothing whatever that stands in opposition to the further conviction that God at particular moments and in particular persons may have stood nearer to humanity, or may have revealed himself at such moments and in such persons in a more eminent way than at other moments and in other persons."

In any case, we have to judge chiefly by the

facts themselves—the actual results, the effects in the life of individuals and nations. We can use no arbitrary standard. Now, so judging, as a matter of fact there is no book of antiquity that we can put beside the Old Testament, no modern book that we can put beside either the Old Testament or the New Testament, for permanent universal moral and spiritual appeal, for inspiring qualities, for making real to us the moral and spiritual world, for making God real, giving us assurance of him, and drawing us to him.

Even more important and fundamental is this—for the revelation is of God, and inspiration is the meeting of God with men—the Bible of the race must be the record of the preëminent meetings of God with men.

Now, in the history of no people is God so plainly present, back of none is God so plainly to be seen, as in and back of Israel; and what the Bible has been to the race—Old Testament as well as New Testament—proves this. Moreover, it is this Jewish history and prophecy which prepare for the revelation in Christ and culminate in him; and this fact again gives the Old Testament a unique place in the spiritual literature of the race. The Old Testament, in truth, has added meaning now from the knowl-

edge of its culmination. In a word, the Bible stands apart from all other books, just because it is the record of the most marked of the actual historical meetings of God with men for ethical and spiritual ends.

As a simple matter of fact, too, we cannot overlook the immense difference between the New Testament as a whole and even the best of the Christian literature of the second century. We are interested in the later literature; but it simply does not seem to us to possess any such significance as the New Testament. However we may explain the difference, we are bound to recognize the fact. The explanation is perhaps not far to seek—the immediate, almost unconscious, reflection of the greatness of Christ's own personality.

Now the historical self-revelation of God *culminated* in Christ. We can conceive nothing higher; we only try to feel our way into the meaning of his spirit and teaching, and the breadth and depth of their application. God has not left the world; he still works in every heart open to him, but he has nothing to show *beyond* what Christ means. The Spirit bears witness of Christ; he takes of his and shows it unto us. The perfect revelation of the Son and of the Father has been made; the

complete ideal toward which humanity is to work has been already given; the satisfying revelation of God, given. We have only to grow continually into the meaning of the revelation.

The record of this culminating revelation is naturally in the many-sided reflections of this supreme person upon his own generation. These are necessary that we may continually go back to him, and catch anew in its full historical setting the supreme revelation of God. With these the great spiritual book of the race naturally closes. No later books, in the nature of the case, can have this unique mission and significance.

With the full recognition of the influence of historical and literary criticism upon it, theology will not only cease to be uncritical and unhistorical, but at the same time become more biblical and more Christian.

The discussion of the influence of historical criticism upon theology concludes the consideration of the mainly intellectual influences of our time. When we turn from these to the influences distinctly moral and spiritual, we may perhaps group them all under the two heads of the deepening sense of the value and sacredness of the person, and the growing

recognition of Christ as the supreme person of history. These may be discussed much more briefly, not because they are less important, but because for our generation they are less in dispute.

CHAPTER IX

THE INFLUENCE OF THE DEEPENING SENSE OF THE VALUE AND SACREDNESS OF THE PERSON

THE greatest outcome of an advancing civilization is the deepening sense of the value of the individual person. This is the very flower and test of civilization. If it be true, as was previously said, that the sensitiveness as to the personal throughout is stronger in our age than in any preceding, this is certain in time to influence theology profoundly. It affects at once our view of inspiration and our whole doctrine of the Spirit in his hidden working, and throws light on the providence of God, on the meaning of prayer, and on the obscurity of spiritual truth, as well as affects the tone of the presentation of every doctrine.

I. THE UNITY OF THE ETHICAL LIFE IN LOVE

Out of it grows, in the first place, the obligation of love, and of a love that not only includes all persons, but that is such a love as to include all virtues. It means, therefore, a

true humanism, but no sentimentalism, for it looks only to the complete character. This unity of the ethical life in love is the first clear step in an ultimate philosophy; it is the most important inheritance left us by Edwards; it is soundly biblical; and it is constantly gaining ground.

But it is still fully recognized by few in theology. The old dualism of justice and love, or holiness and love, still works confusion in both ethics and theology. It is still too largely felt that there is division in God; that nature, law, and grace root in different purposes, instead of all working to the same end. Even those who have meant wholly to accept the all-embracing character of love have seldom carried it fearlessly out for God and for man, at all times, and in all conditions. But to carry entirely through this principle of the unity of the ethical life in love is the only logical consequence of the present sense of the value of the person. "Not that we love God, but that he loved us." "Every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God."

And it is the very sense of the sacredness and value of the person which has brought about the "reduction of the area of Calvinism" of which Fisher speaks. It is simply impos-

sible to hold to arbitrary decrees in the old sense in the face of this conviction. The reaction, also, by elaborate argument and labored exegesis, against the universal fatherhood of God, that all men as men are the children of God, is for a like reason simply hopeless. That distinctions are to be made between the various uses of the term "child of God," is obvious; but the conviction of the universal fatherhood of God has grown directly out of the representation of God by Christ, and its connection with the root cannot be severed by ever so elaborate an argument.

II. THE RECOGNITION OF THE WHOLE MAN

The deepening sense of the worth of the person means, in the second place, the recognition of the whole man. The whole man is expressed only in personal relations. Theology accepts heartily psychology's new assertion of the unity of man, and seeks to take account of the entire spirit. It believes with modern philosophy that man is the key to all problems, but only the whole man. If I do not mistake the drift of modern thinking, it is in essential agreement with Lotze's main contention, "that the nature of things does not

consist in thoughts, and that thinking is not able to grasp it; yet perhaps the whole mind experiences in other forms of its action and passion the essential meaning of all being and action, thought subsequently serving it as an instrument, by which that which is thus experienced is brought into the connection which its nature requires, and is experienced in more intensity as the mind is master of this connection."[1] This statement, if closely pressed, is perhaps open to the objection that it seems to imply that reality is found *more* through feeling and action than through thought; but it is thoroughly justified so far as it is an insistence, as it, certainly, mainly is, that man is more than intellect; and, therefore, that an adequate philosophy, no less than an adequate theology, must take account of all the data—emotional and volitional as well as intellectual; æsthetic, ethical, and religious, as well as mechanical. It is a revolt against a misnamed rationalism that knows only intellect, in favor of a genuine rationalism that knows the whole man. It believes, therefore, with Armstrong's putting of Seth's position, that "the language of morality or religion, the language which speaks of God in terms of our

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 359, 360.

own highest experience, is really *truer* than purely metaphysical language concerning God *can be.* 'Religion and higher poetry . . . carry us nearer to the meaning of the world than the formulæ of an abstract metaphysics.'"

III. THE EXCLUSION OF THE MECHANICAL

In the third place, this emphasis on the personal means for theology the exclusion of the mechanical, as contrasted with the spiritual, everywhere. It is noticeable that all agree essentially in this aim of excluding the mechanical, though they do not agree as to what is mechanical. It is this spirit that makes so certain that the attempt to press the analogy of the lower evolution is wrong. It is this that leads strong conservatives like Frank, liberals like Pfleiderer, and Ritschlians like Herrmann, all alike, to emphasize the importance of the inner spiritual evidence to Christianity.

This movement logically requires of theology that it do not stop until it interpret all its strictly theological problems in terms of personal relation. The relations are nowhere more intensely personal. Theology will yet put more meaning than it ever has put into

Christ's declaration: "This is life eternal, that they should *know thee*, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Deepening acquaintance with God is the one all-embracing problem of the Christian life; every step of it is a personal relation; and its laws are the laws of friendship.

This steady and certain movement away from the mechanical to the personal is the inner ground of dissatisfaction with all natural, legal, and governmental analogies, applied, e. g., to the doctrine of the atonement. The deep significance of Dr. Trumbull's exhaustive survey in his remarkable books on *The Blood Covenant* and *The Threshold Covenant* is that he traces back so clearly analogies that have been otherwise interpreted to the closest personal relations. And yet the more or less mechanical analogies will pass away as only subordinately helpful, not because they are attacked from without, but because, in the deepening sense of the intensely personal nature of the relations involved, the basis of their appeal will have broken down within. They will be set aside, not because they make too much of the work of Christ in his life or death, but because they make too little of it; because they leave our relation to him still too

external and mechanical, and fail to bring it home to us as a moral reality. The more personal view believes that more truly and really than any other it can say: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Indeed, the modern view of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, starting from the thought of the "suffering servant of Jehovah," gives as admirable an illustration as could be desired of the personal and spiritual nature of the atonement.

This interpretation of all strictly theological problems in terms of personal relations will bring great gain to theology in both simplicity and unity; it will make theology *seem* to many less scientific, because it will have dropped much technical language which has no longer any proper application; but it will have deepened in the same proportion the perception of the real spiritual problems, and will lean more on psychology and ethics, and less on metaphysics and jurisprudence. The two closing chapters of this book are intended to indicate more fully some of the lines of such a reconstruction of theology in personal terms.

IV. THE REJECTION OF SACRAMENTALISM

The denial of the separation between sacred and secular things, which also grows out of the sense of the sacredness of personality, looks to the inevitable rejection of all sacramentalism as necessarily mechanical. It knows no sacred things, but only sacred persons. The sacredness of things and places and times is wholly borrowed from persons. And between things no line is to be drawn of sacred and secular. "All things are yours," and all are means only, but all may be made means. There is to be war on the worldly spirit, but not on the world. We are to be in the world, though not of the world.

It is by no means unimportant, for a theology that intends to keep itself free from mere mechanism and superstition, to see clearly the two sides of the truth here: that the most holy things are so only because they minister to the spirit of a living person; and that *all* things are to be so used as to give this ministration. If one chooses to say so, this is to make all things sacramental; but it is the death of the older sacramentalism which lives on the assertion of the sole virtue of certain things. The older sacramentalism is some-

times simple superstition; and sometimes it owes its existence to the seeking of the relief found in it as a form of absolute abandonment of self — including reason — a strong instinct in those inclined toward an authoritative catholicism. Where neither of these things is true, sacramentalism seems to be either largely æsthetic, or to be due to two tendencies: to an association of ideas — the connection of the sacred thing with personal or historical memories, and to the apparent helpfulness of concrete realities as channels of spiritual experience — the psychological ground of idolatry. Just now the doctrine of the incarnation is being widely used, especially in England, to spiritualize sacramentalism and to put new life into it; but it is only the sound of the word — incarnation — not its true meaning, which gives the view any support. The revelation of God in Christ is beyond all else personal, and only personal; it is no mere toying with the flesh of humanity. So, too, the church is no institution, but, as Fairbairn says, "the church is the *people* of God; wherever they are he is, and the church through him in them."[1]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 530.

V. THE QUICKENING OF THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

The intense quickening of the social conscience, too, which also is born of the sense of the worth of the person, cannot help deepening our insight into another side of biblical and Christian teaching. This is for theology simply the clear recognition of the large place given to the kingdom of God in the teaching of Christ. The astonishment is that, even apart from the explicit teaching as to the kingdom, with Christ's statement of the great commandment before men, any other view could have been held. Flight from the world and flight from human relations were no legitimate growth from the spirit of Christ. In any case, it would seem that we can never again forget that "we are members one of another."

And few principles have so many vital applications in theology. As certain as that the great commandment is love, and that the great means to character is association, so certain is it that we are necessary one to another. As certain as that each has his own individual outlook on the divine, so certain is it that we need to share each other's visions. The principle sheds its light

on the problem of evil, on the question of the divine providence, and on the meaning of intercessory prayer, and on many another dark place in our thinking. Only through it is the full greatness of the human spirit seen, and the largeness of the life open to it, for it implies the divine friendship as well. All this is true, and much more.

But we must not make here another false application of the analogy of the organism. In truth, it needs to be said with emphasis that we understand better what we mean by personal relations and by friendship, than we do what we mean by organic relations and organism. The latter are more easily imaged, but the real final law of the relations we understand much less than the personal. It is well to know exactly in what sense the isolated individual is an abstraction, as is so frequently said nowadays. In two senses: first, that every individual is so constituted that at the beginning for very existence, and all along for his own development and good, he requires relations with others; and secondly, that by the time he has reached capacity for independent action, he is already under multiplied obligations to others near and remote, from which he can-

not rightfully simply withdraw. On the other hand, it is to create an obvious abstraction, however much we deceive ourselves by the analogy, to make these facts of relations of individuals a ground for affirming the existence of a being — society or the state — which is supposed to have some meaning and value in and of itself, apart from the welfare of individuals. There is no value or happiness finally except in the individual spirit. It is only playing with the ambiguity of the word to say that the social conscience is a revolt from individualism. Individualism, in the sense of selfishness? Yes. From a true individualism? No. Indeed, to press, as many are now doing, the analogy of the organism, is really to repudiate that out of which the whole development of the social conscience has come — the sense of the value of the individual person.

VI. THE INCREASING EMPHASIS UPON THE ETHICAL

Every one of the foregoing considerations drawn from emphasis on the personal implies, also, an increasing emphasis on the ethical, which affects theology at every point.

The very definition of religion is changed. Religion is clearly seen to be no device for avoiding the necessity of character, no substitute for it, but the one truest way to character,—a relation which involves character in its very existence. The separation of the ethical and religious is becoming impossible. The reality of the moral life of man seems to us now one of the main foundations of a religious view. And we can conceive no salvation that does not include character. We believe that the ethical is *always* involved in every genuine religious experience. As Herrmann puts it: "Neither in what is opposed to duty, nor in what is indifferent to it, can we meet with God, or do we desire to do so."[1]

We are compelled, therefore, to a reinterpretation of the Reformation formula. We see with Paul in faith a real personal relation, but one that is the germ of *real* righteousness. To deny all worth to faith, any activity on the part of man, is simply to deny that that has taken place which it is the whole aim of redemption to bring about —the voluntary choosing to be a child of God, of like character with him. A thor-

[1] *The Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 106.

oughly ethical conception of salvation affects theological statements in unlooked-for ways, and to an extent impossible even to indicate. It is no denial of a real forgiveness of sins, but it makes sin not less but more serious. On the other hand, it puts an absolute bar to the older Calvinism of salvation by divine decree, supposing that that made conceivable the idea of character at all. The atonement, too, can get its full meaning only as it is conceived as ethical *throughout*.

VII. THE PRACTICAL TEST OF DOCTRINE

And, if theology accepts the guidance not only of ethics but also of psychology with what Paulsen calls its "voluntaristic trend," it must be practical, having a clear outlook upon action. Certainly in religion, which professes to give principles for life—a method of living—if anywhere, judgment by consequences ought to apply, and theology must not shrink from this test. Moreover, all doctrine should be originally only the thought expression of experience or its supposed implications, and should have, therefore, a solely practical source; and this ought to make it certain that it will have a practical use. All doctrine must

have meaning for life. It must be seen to bear on life; something must follow from it for attitude and conduct. This is the very ground of distinction between moral and spiritual truth and other truth. The former is always an appeal to character. If it is not so, we may be very sure it is not correctly stated. The New England theologians, therefore, rightly sought a theology that could be *preached*. So far as theology is a science of practical religion, the test is genuine and needed, but it would cut severely much that goes under the name of theology, even so defined. For it can hardly be denied that there has been much in theology which either had no religious significance, or but awkwardly expressed this religious significance as a merely external attachment to the doctrinal statement.

And a practical theology must be a missionary theology. Here is a practical outworking of Christian experience that theology must express. The present conditions, moreover, are all the time in intolerable contradiction with the Christian assertion of what ought to be, and with Christ's sole purpose in coming to men. Hence the more close theology comes to life, and the more vital it keeps its

conceptions and its contact with Christ, the more certainly missionary it will be. That theology will be missionary that has so vital a conception of the relation to God that it sees, on the one hand, the infinite richness of the life of the child of God, and, on the other hand, really enters into God's thought of sin and its loss, and into his love for men; that sees the sin of men in the light of the love and the holiness of God as a perpetual pain to God; that enters, therefore, into the double sympathy of Christ with God and with man, bearing in its measure the sin of the world; and that, consequently, must go to men with the same glad tidings and with the same seeking suffering love with which Christ came.

CHAPTER X

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RECOGNITION OF CHRIST AS THE SUPREME PERSON OF HISTORY

ALL these deeper moral convictions of our time, which we have been considering in the last chapter, lead naturally to the recognition of Christ as the supreme person, and therefore the supreme fact, of history and the supreme revelation of God; and this recognition in turn strengthens all the other convictions. It might be a truer thing to say that all these deepening convictions have really grown out of the permeating influence of the spirit of Christ. Certainly it is true that it was only the teaching of Christ that gave the deepest conception of the value of the person, as the child of God, and made that thought a living power.

This growing convergence of the thought of the world toward Christ is far the greatest fact of our time. The whole inductive temper in science, in philosophy, and in history itself is bound to bring into increasing prominence the figure of Christ. No adequate philosophy, certainly, can ignore this supreme person and

therefore the supreme fact of the world. Philosophy rightly calls the present the age of man, but it is becoming increasingly clear, as the deep old proverb has it, that "the secret of man is the secret of Messiah," and so the age of man is the age of Christ. Evolution, too, needs the distinctively Christian stage and the resurrected Christ as the only rational justification of the age-long process which has preceded. When psychology, also, asks for the supreme conditions and means to character and happiness, it reaches precisely those which are found in their perfection only in Christ and his teaching. At the end of every path, in fact, there looms up before us this one great towering figure.

The simple truth is that we stand face to face with the historical Christ, as it has been said, "in a sense and to a degree unknown to the church since the apostolic age." It is a most significant fact that every single great life of Christ since the Gospels is the product of the last sixty-five years. Every ray of light —historical, critical, philosophic, ethical, religious—has been concentrated upon him. No such study was ever given to any theme. It would be criminal thoughtlessness that could make that fact without effect in theology.

Better to know Christ is, certainly, to be able to speak more adequately about him. And it would be our shame, not the glory of the fathers, if in spite of the deepening knowledge of Christ, we were content to speak precisely as they spoke. We would much better try to speak as we believe they would speak now. The very movement itself makes it certain, however, that this is not to make Christ less, but more.

I. CHRIST AS THE SUPREME REVELATION OF GOD

The recovery of the historical Christ, this growing recognition of his supremacy, means for theology, then, in the first place, that it accepts Christ in truth as the *supreme* revelation of God, its one great source of the knowledge of God's character and purpose. With this fact it is in dead earnest. It does not deny that there are other sources, but it holds them to be distinctly subordinate. Christ and only Christ is adequate to give the Christian conception of God. It welcomes gladly all other light, and it knows that the mind must do its best to bring into unity all its possessions; but natural theology is for it supplementary rather than basic, subordinate to

Christ, not coördinate with him. It seeks with all earnestness approximation to *Christ's* theology. It erects no altar to an unknown God; it takes refuge in neither scholasticism nor mysticism. It knows one God, the God revealed in Christ, and it accepts with confidence the affirmation of Christ: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, show us the Father?"

The cry "Back to Christ" means for theology that Christ is really supreme, in the Bible and out of it. And it believes that any reaction against the cry, so interpreted, is doomed to failure. Doubtless, theology must recognize the indispensable value of the apostolic testimony to Christ, but it must reserve the right—and it is vain to deny it—by legitimate historical criticism to work back from the reflection of Christ to the Christ reflected. That Christ is Lord, ought to be no divisive cry for any disciple of Christ.

II. GOD, AS FATHER, THE RULING CONCEPTION IN THEOLOGY

And of the character of the God who reveals himself in Christ theology can have no doubt. It sees God *in Christ;* it knows and seeks no

better name for him than Christ's own constantly repeated name, Father. And when it seeks to interpret that name by Christ's own spirit in life and death, it seems for the first time really to know what love and what sin are. God is no longer onlooker, nor even sovereign merely; but Father, holy and loving, who because he hates sin and knows its awfulness, and yet loves with surpassing love his child, suffers in the sin of his child. It is no sentimentalism. The more the Father loves the child, the more he hates the sin of the child and must use every means to put the sin away. On the other hand, the revelation of the Father alone brings his sin adequately to the man himself. It puts his sin in the light of the suffering love of God, of what it costs the Father's heart, and brings home so the shame of it and the guilt of it as no punishment could possibly do. Christ's conception of God as Father, as Fairbairn justly says, must be taken as the really ruling conception, determining all else in theology. That Christ's conception of God as Father should really rule in theology, means more for theology than appears at once. Like the deepening sense of the value and sacredness of the person, considered in the last chapter, it can hardly

fail to lead to a reconstruction of theology in strict terms of personal relation.

III. EMPHASIS ON THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Historical criticism has brought us also into the very presence of the *man* Jesus, and has renewed for us, therefore, the gospel's own emphasis on the humanity of Christ, almost forgotten by the church in spite of both Gospels and creeds. But it is most significant that it is directly through this study of the humanity of Jesus that his lordship and divinity have become so plain. It is no Unitarian drift which the age has disclosed, and yet it accepts the emphasis on Christ's humanity. The religious need of the humanity of Christ, we should not forget, is very great. Otherwise his whole life is unreal, and has no true relation to our life, and he could give to us no perfect revelation of the perfect filial relation to God—no true revelation of man. But more than this is true. It is supremely in the *character* of Christ that God stands fully revealed, and this character must be real—the real character of the man Jesus. His true humanity is, therefore, essential to the revelation of his divinity as well—to any true revela-

tion of God. Christ's humanity and divinity stand thus in closest relations. We find in Christ, not God *and* man, but God revealed because true man.

IV. THE QUESTION OF A SOCIAL TRINITY

But there is one inference widely drawn from this newly awakened belief in the divinity of Christ, against which, it seems to the writer, earnest and honest protest should be made. No age has had a more thorough and intelligent conviction of the lordship and divinity of Christ than ours. This conviction is the deepest and most inspiring influence in theology to-day; but this conviction is grounded on straightforward historical study of the character of Christ, not on metaphysical speculation. It can be no service to the church, it would seem, under this fresh and independent conviction to react toward a really metaphysical tritheism, affirming social relations and love within the Godhead, in the immanent Trinity. The attempt has been widely approved, but I cannot doubt that, so far as it becomes a living faith, it means tritheism pure and simple, and will surely bring its own punishment. It seems probable that this at-

tempt has come from a sincere desire to give Christ his true glory. But it has virtually proceeded, nevertheless, upon the wholly unwarranted assumption that the relations of Christ to God, whether on earth or in his preëxistence or in his exaltation, were to be transferred forthwith to the relations of the immanent Trinity — to the inner relations of the very being of God himself.

This, at least, is true: nothing calls for more absolute and complete personality than love and social relations. To affirm social relations, therefore, in the Godhead is to assert absolute tritheism. And no possible manipulation of the terms can avoid it. The analysis of self-consciousness, also, taken from Hegel, it seems to the writer — to put it flatly — helps not at all to a real trinity and proves nothing. It is far better that we should admit that we simply do not understand the eternal Trinity, than that, by explanations which do not explain, we should be driven to ascribe three persons to God in the only sense in which we can understand person, and not be able to say that God is one person in any sense we can understand. This new tritheism seems to me far less defensible than even the oldest credal statements of the Trinity, for those were at

least scrupulously careful to insist that the distinctions in the Godhead were not personal, but that God was in truth one.

We are likely to find the biblical doctrine of the Trinity more satisfying both intellectually and religiously than any later abstractly wrought out statements. We believe in one God, our Father, concretely and supremely revealed and brought nigh with absolute and abiding assurance in Christ, and making himself known in the hearts of all who will receive him, in the most intimate, constant, and powerful, but not obtrusive, friendship possible to man, giving thus the supreme conditions of both character and happiness. This is the great practical New Testament confession of faith, contained both in the apostolic benediction and in the baptismal formula.

Moreover, the religious need of the strict unity of God is very great. I want to know that God himself, the infinite source of all, is my Father; that he, not some second being, loves me. And this is the very significance of Christ that *God* is in him, speaks and works through him. This seems to be Christ's constant testimony, and the one view that fairly includes both sides of John's representation of him. It is the great meaning

of Christ that he reveals God himself, that we may see God's love in his love. Less than this seems still to leave us far from the gospel, as both Athanasius and Luther felt, and underestimates the significance of Christ. "He that hath seen me *hath* seen the Father."

The Unitarian movement at the time of its origin, it can hardly be denied, had a real historical justification. There was needed a protest against a virtual tritheism; nevertheless, Unitarianism takes the wrong road to a true goal. Perhaps the needed contrast may be put thus: Unitarianism emphasizes the *humanity* of Christ to preserve the unity of God; the true view emphasizes the *divinity* of Christ to preserve the unity.

V. THE PRACTICAL LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

But it is the greatest glory of this new sense of the historical Christ that, whether we are able adequately or in agreement to phrase his relation to us or to God, the fact stands out with increasing clearness for all men, that simply coming into his presence we find the key to the meaning of life, we find ourselves, we find God. Not apologetically, therefore, not with misgiving, but in glad con-

fidence, we own him Lord. In our intellectual formulations of his person we may not satisfy one another. But "no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." It is hardly possible to mistake, for example, the note of personal confession and joy in these words of Adolf Harnack: "When God and everything that is sacred threaten to disappear in darkness, or our doom is pronounced; when the mighty forces of inexorable nature seem to overwhelm us, and the bounds of good and evil to dissolve; when, weak and weary, we despair of finding God at all in this dismal world—it is then that the personality of Christ may save us."[1] And to the same import, Herrmann says even more convincingly: "The child-like spirit can only arise within us when our experience is the same as a child's: in other words, when we meet with a personal life which compels us to trust it without reserve. Only the person of Jesus can arouse such trust in a man who has awakened to moral self-consciousness. If such a man surrenders himself to anything or any one else, he throws away not only his trust but himself."[2]

[1] *Christianity and History*, p. 47.
[2] *The Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 97.

When theology tries now honestly to take account of these great convictions of our own age, it only attempts more adequately to conceive the great abiding truths of Christianity and make them real to *this* generation. It seeks to be more *Christian*—closer to the very spirit and teaching of Christ, its supreme authority; more *personal* and reverent of personality—insisting on the whole man and the personal relations which are essential in every moral and spiritual problem; more *biblical*—with unfaltering faith in the historical revelation of God, and owning the priceless value of the reflections of Christ in his own generation, it means to give a weight to biblical statements in theology that has not yet been given; more *historical*—for it wishes humbly to know the actual way that God has taken, not its own imaginings; more *practical*—for it looks only to life, the highest life; more *ethical*—for it knows that to be a child of God is to be of like character with God; more *social*—for it remembers the great commandment: Christian, personal, biblical, historical, practical, ethical, social, and, once again and supremely, Christian. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "And this

is life eternal, that they should *know* thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

But all these modern demands on theology, growing chiefly out of both the influence of the deepening sense of the value and sacredness of the person, and the influence of the recognition of Christ as the supreme person of history, naturally lead us on to the thought of the reconstruction of theology in terms of personal relation. For only such a reconstruction can fairly meet any one of these demands, or be commensurate with the complexity and significance of the moral and spiritual facts involved. And the other influences, as well, of our time which are legitimately affecting theology not only do not preclude, but seem distinctly to invite, such a restatement in personal terms. Certainly, if theology is to be truly scientific, it must recognize its facts for what they are, and so see their peculiarly personal nature, and, consequently, count all statements, that even tacitly ignore this, to be quite inadequate. So, too, our discussion of miracles and of evolution tended to emphasize the fact and significance of the personal stage of the evolution reached in man. And it is perhaps

the chief gain of the historical and literary criticism of the Bible, that it has made the Bible so much more personal, by bringing out into clear light the personal revelation of the personal God through persons.

Now, in thinking of such a reconstruction of theology in personal terms, we need first to see that the religious life itself is best conceived as a personal relation; and then to discern more definitely, than has been here indicated, why we are compelled to a restatement of theology in personal terms, and to illustrate what such a restatement would mean. Only an illustration, of course, is possible; for a complete restatement would require the setting forth of an entire theology; and it is the purpose of this book rather to clear the ground for such a reconstructed theology, than to write it.

THE RESULTING RECONSTRUCTION IN THEOLOGY

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION AS A PERSONAL RELATION

OUR thinking cannot be without its finally profound reaction on our living. False conceptions of the religious life, then, must injure the life itself; true conceptions, on the other hand, must prove of positive help against mistakes and discouragement. Theology, too, is only a thoughtful and unified expression of what religion means to us. The conception of religion, therefore, will be of determining significance for theology also. And reasonable agreement in the conception of religion would do more than anything else to bring unity into our theologies. The needs, then, of both our religious living and our religious thinking demand the utmost care in our conception of religion—the closest possible approximation to Christ's thought here.

All Christians would doubtless agree that

the ideal of religion for the individual would be to come into such ethical and spiritual relations to God as those in which Christ stood. Now whatever else was true of this relation, it was, first and foremost, a *personal* relation. And this commonplace — religion, a personal, filial relation to God in Christ — carefully heeded, has consequences of the highest importance for both our Christian life and thought. In truth, the writer believes *there is no greater need, in religious living and theological thinking to-day, than a thorough-going and consistent hold on Christ's thought of religion as a personal relation to God.* Many practical and theoretical difficulties that have grown up in the course of the Christian centuries yield readily to this simple solvent. More often than otherwise we have originally created our difficulties by substituting, for the actual concrete personal relations, abstract or mechanical conceptions of some sort.

But this conception of the Christian life as a deepening friendship with God is so important and so enlightening when accurately grasped that it is the more necessary that certain points be made clear, that we may guard against extravagant and misleading statements.

I. GUARDING THE CONCEPTION

In the first place, the God with whom we come into personal relation is not the God of mere religious fancy or mystical experience, nor the God of philosophical speculation, but the God revealed concretely, unmistakably, in the ethical and spiritual personality of Jesus Christ. He alone is the supreme and religiously adequate revelation of God. There are other partial manifestations of God without and within, but only he who has seen Christ has adequately seen the Father. The Christian seeks personal relation with God *in Christ*. Other notions of God must be adjusted to this clear revelation in Christ, not this to other notions. Where this is not kept clear, some mystical experience of our own may be exalted, out of all due proportion, into an authority that is supposed not only to make us quite independent of our brethren, but even at the height of our raptures to enable us to do without Christ.

Moreover, when we speak of a personal relation to God, we of course do not mean that we can give exactly the same kind of reality to it as to our relations to other persons who are to us compelling sensuous

facts. And yet the unreality of which men sometimes complain in their relation to God is probably due, more often than they think, to the simple lack of some sensuous presentation. But even in our relation to other men, we should remember, we are conscious that the spiritual relation in which we stand to them is more and other than the mere fact that they are presented to us in bodies which affect our senses. And whatever their sense manifestations—gesture, facial expression, glance of eye, or speech—all have to be spiritually interpreted by us, often uncertainly enough, before they can mean anything for our spiritual relation to these other persons. Our relation to God, then, is not less real and personal, because it is not sensuous.

Nor, in affirming that religion is a present relation to God, are we unwarrantedly asserting such a sense of the immediate presence of God in Christ as we suppose belongs to the future life. Even Paul, with all the vividness of his religious experience and language, speaks of "the desire to depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better." The Christian looks for a far more glorious manifestation of God in Christ, in the future life, than here he can attain.

Nor, when we speak of the possibility of real friendship with God, are we asserting a relation of familiar equality with God. Any true human friendship, we find, shows itself in marked reverence for the personality of the other. The divine friendship is not less real, then, that it implies devout reverence and godly fear — a clear sense of the moral rebuke of the revelation of God in Christ, as well as of the manifestation of his grace. Æsthetic admiration for Christ is no true love for Christ.

Perhaps one might say with Kaftan,[1] that our present personal relation to God in Christ, in the grounds of its certainty, is more like our relation to the moral demands, the certainty and power of which depend on one's own inner life. Here are realities which are no sense-facts, and yet which are among our primal certainties, though the clearness and power of our vision of them are affected by the prevailing tone of our own inner life.

> "So duly, daily, needs provision be
> For keeping the soul's prowess possible,
> Building new barriers as the old decay,
> Saving us from evasion of life's proof,
> Putting the question ever, 'Does God love,
> And will ye hold that truth against the world'?" [2]

[1] *American Journal of Theology*, October, 1898, p. 824.
[2] Robert Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

"Religion is a deed," Lotze says; and that would mean that our certainty of God, like our certainty of the ethical realities, would go up and down with our own moral life.

Closely connected with this kind of certainty that we may have of God, is the reason that exists for *the needed obscurity of spiritual truth*. This reason is like the familiar "advantageous deficiency" in moral insight, as it has been called, according to which, in spite of much experience of the happiness of doing right, it still seems to us, with each recurring temptation, that our happiness lies in the line of the temptation, and that to turn from this temptation is to turn our backs on our happiness. This deficiency in moral insight, as well as the familiar complaint that the wicked prosper, that the righteous are not always rewarded, that the innocent suffer—all this is necessary if life is to be at all an adequate sphere for the development of moral character. If the reward of righteousness followed at once and invariably, and this were always infallibly clear to us, we could not trust our own righteousness; it would seem at best but enlightened selfishness. But now we can "serve God for naught." Now a similar reason exists why God's relation to

us must not be an obtrusive one, but often hidden past our tracing out. As Kant long ago pointed out,[1] if God were always certainly and patently present to us with full sense of the meaning of the fact, there would be such excess of motive as practically to override our freedom. There would be, again, no proper sphere for the development of real character. We need the invisible, not the visible, God for character. Without developing the thought further, at present, the point now to be insisted upon is that, in speaking of religion as a personal relation to God, it is not meant that the relation will be a perfectly obvious one, constantly obtruding itself upon us with compulsive force; it will rather be distinctly *unobtrusive*, sometimes quite hidden, a constant divine coöperation, but guarding most sacredly our personal freedom, that our character may be ours in truth.

One more misconception needs to be guarded against in affirming religion to be simply a personal relation to God. The significance of a friendship depends upon the significance of the persons involved. Plainly the personal relation to God must be as

[1] *Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason*, Eng. Tr.; Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 356–358.

unique as he is unique. Can we see clearly in what this uniqueness consists? No personal relation can be absolutely single and isolated. Even men are so closely related to one another that a change in my personal relation to one may vitally affect all my personal relations. But still *the relation to God has a universality all its own.*

For, in the first place, the conviction of the love of God, of love at the heart of things, ultimately underlies all our reasoning and all our living—all our happiness and all our work. For that any of these should be possible, the world must be a sphere of rational thinking and rational action; and rational, not merely in the narrow sense that it can be construed by our intellects, is barely thinkable, but in the broad sense, that it has worth that can satisfy the whole man. And any whole-hearted work, too, as Paulsen has indicated,[1] must go forward on the religious assumption that we are in relation to God, that there is a great ongoing universal plan embracing our little work, and not suffering it, therefore, to be a worthless fragment. The relation to God, in all these fundamental ways, obviously not only includes relations to all,

[1] *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 8.

but alone gives reality and meaning to all other relations.

In the second place, the simple existence of God and of other moral beings constitutes forthwith a moral universe, without any external enactment or arrangement. That there is such a moral world at all means that there is law expressed in the very constitution of every moral being, a recognition of the eternal distinction of right and wrong; and that requires the law of consequences—that we must reap what we sow. Without this there could be no moral being, and so no moral world. The recognition of law in this sense, therefore, is no denial of the sole reality of personal relations; rather is it true that personal relations necessarily involve law so conceived. It is to be noted, moreover, that this law, written in the constitution of man, must be regarded as an expression of the personal will of God, and every sin becomes thus a personal sin against God. There is no *abstract* law or government of any kind. The personal relation to God, then, must have universal moral implications such as no other personal relation can have. For when I am approved of God, I am approved by the Being who is himself expressed in the moral consti-

tution of all, and so stand approved in relation to all. Such a personal relation, when adequately conceived, has no need to be supplemented by any other notion, as of government. It contains in itself the whole truth. The fact is not that we are in personal relation to God, and *also* in relation to his government; we are in relation to the government of God because and in that we are in personal relation to God. God himself is in such relation to all his creatures that relation to him cannot be an isolated relation, but puts us at once in touch with all.

We may reach the same result from another point of view. To come into friendship with God is really to share his life; but the very life of God is love, self-giving, pouring himself out into the life of his creatures. To share his life, therefore, is necessarily to enter into like loving relations to all men. The second commandment thus grows inevitably out of the first. A deepening friendship with God, therefore, includes right relations with men; the religious life is ethical in its very nature and from the start; and thus once more it is seen to be impossible to come into right personal relation to God, and not at the same time to come into right relation to all moral beings.

The relation to God, therefore, is unique, because conviction of the love of God underlies all rational living, because God is himself the source of the moral constitution of men, and because God alone is perfect in character. For all these reasons, the relation to God cannot be conceived sentimentally, and is only the more significant, but it is not less personal. In all these basal ways, "we love because he first loved us."

To the philosophical objection, "But is God really a person?" this much may be here briefly said: In affirming the personality of God, no thinker means to assert of God the limitations of man. And it is not true, as is often assumed, that in removing the limitations involved in our human personality, we have thereby denied personality to God. Rather are we coming to see, according to Lotze's suggestion,[1] that it is a part of the finiteness of us men, that we are but incompletely personal; that complete self-consciousness, complete freedom, and perfect personality cannot belong to the part, but only to the whole; that only the Infinite can be completely personal. Moreover, it is misleading to say, God is supra-personal, though not sub-

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 683–688.

personal, if more is meant by this than simply that we may not think that our thought can wholly fathom God, that we do not know how much more God may be than our best thought can conceive. For, if we suppose that we can go on to define the supra-personal, we can do so only after the analogy of either the personal or the sub-personal, since we know only these. And if now we turn from the personal, we turn from the highest we know to a lower analogy to form our conception of God, and are thus simply following the analogy of the sub-personal, however we try to conceal the fact from ourselves.

II. THE LAWS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, THOSE OF A DEEPENING FRIENDSHIP

Having guarded thus carefully against misconceptions, we return to our original proposition: Religion is a personal relation of man to God. Because God is a person and we are persons, our relation to him must be a personal relation. Moreover, as personality is complete only in God, our relation to God ought to be even more completely personal than our relation to men, not so subject to human limitations. And again, the more

strenuously one insists upon religion as ethical, the more fully must religion be recognized as a personal relation, for ethical relations are everywhere ultimately personal. With clear perception, then, of the unique significance of the relation to God, we must still unhesitatingly assert that religion is a personal relation to God.

But if this is so, it means that all the experiences of the Christian life may best be brought under the phenomena of friendship; that its highest possible attainments may be best considered as a deepening friendship; that the conditions may be best known and best definitely formulated as conditions of a deepening friendship. This conception of the Christian life as friendship is fundamental and thoroughgoing, with wide implications. It has been often used in an illustrative way as an analogy; but, so far as the writer knows, it has never been carried thoroughly through in all the aspects of Christian life and experience and thinking, as the nearest approach man can make to the final realities of religion. It is far more than an analogy; it is a fact; our relation to God *is* a personal relation, and its laws must be those of personal relations. To say so is only to interpret religion by the

very highest in ourselves, and this is our best and only adequate key. If we fail to use this conception, we are simply forced to employ a lower and less sufficient analogy.

We are coming with increasing clearness to recognize that there must be law in the spiritual world; that there must be conditions which may be known and fulfilled. We have not seen quite so clearly that there is a guiding principle which will direct us infallibly to these laws and conditions. With the coming in of man, evolution reaches in its progress the stage of personal relation and revelation; and upon principles of evolution itself we should expect, on this new stage, new laws which will dominate the lower laws. These new laws correspond to the stage reached and are, consequently, laws of personal relation. If a man knows, then, the laws of any true friendship, he may know all the essential laws of the friendship with God. He need not work in the dark, or catch eagerly, now at this great secret of Christian living, now at that; the laws and conditions are certain; they may be known and fulfilled, and one may count on the result; and they are the laws and conditions of a deepening friendship. One's whole life so takes on a marvelous unity. The di-

vine and human relations are no longer at war. Every human relation truly fulfilled throws direct light on the divine relation and is a direct help to it.

III. THE SUBORDINATE ANALOGY OF GROWING APPRECIATION OF ANY SPHERE OF VALUE

A useful subordinate analogy (not wholly adequate) may serve as an introduction to the fuller statement of the laws of a deepening friendship. The laws which hold in growing appreciation of any sphere of value, hold also in personal relations, and have there their highest exemplification, for in persons is finally concentrated all value. How, then, do we come into a growing appreciation of any sphere of value: of beauty in nature, of music, of art, or of literature?

In the first place, we are commonly *introduced* into the new sphere of value through the witness of some other. Our attention is directed to the new value because of what it seems to mean to some one else. A man, who should depend wholly on his own original discoveries of the valuable, would live inevitably a very narrow life. The artist, the genius, the true critic, is a man who has seen; he

calls our attention to a value we are missing. But if this witness of another is to be of any worth, it must be absolutely honest, a true statement of what the other has found.

The second condition for a growing appreciation of the best things is absolute *honesty* on our own part. Merely to repeat another's witness as our own is not only misleading to others, but dishonest and damaging to our own further vision and growth. Few things are more damaging to growing appreciation in any sphere than pretense. To begin with pretense is to vitiate any genuine appreciation from the start. But there is need of caution here. In our desire to be absolutely honest, we are not forthwith to identify all the real with what now seems real to us. It is true that we are not to pretend at any point, but we are not thereby to deny the value and reality of all that is either, in our present mood, unreal to us, or has not yet been at all reached by us.

A third condition, therefore, of growth into the thing of value is *modesty* — teachableness; no dishonest repetition, certainly, of the witness of another who has larger experience in this sphere, but no denial either of his witness; rather the confident hope of much

yet to come for ourselves, to which we too, therefore, may in time bear honest witness.

But the greatest of all conditions for growing appreciation of the valuable, and the condition that in a way involves all others, is simply *staying in the presence of the best* in any given sphere of value. Read persistently the best books, hear persistently the best music, see persistently the best art, and unconsciously your taste will improve and grow certain. This is the highest and surest counsel that can be given for growth into the valuable. You need not pretend. The best will in time justify and verify itself—make its own appeal to you. But the very statement of this last and greatest condition for growing appreciation implies that one may know beforehand that he cannot get the whole value at once. The greater the value, the more certainly will it take long time for full appreciation; and the highest test of the truly classical is that it not only bears acquaintance, but perpetually grows on one with acquaintance.

These conditions, then, of our dependence on the witness of another, of honesty, of modesty, and of staying in the presence of the best, hold in all spheres of value, and not less in a deepening friendship. It is worth while

to state them, and to see their truth, and to discern the close analogy which holds between the value of persons and other values, for the very reason that we feel less intensely concerning these other values because they are not personal and moral; and hence we can sometimes see more dispassionately and clearly just what the conditions are, and so carry their light over into the final interpretation of the personal.

Passing, then, even from the helpful analogy of growing appreciation of the beautiful, directly to our problem, what are the laws of a deepening friendship? The friendship with God must have essentially the same basis and the same conditions as any deepening friendship worthy the name. What is that basis, and what are those conditions? The limits of this chapter permit but the briefest statement; but the writer believes that the more carefully the comparison is wrought out and studied, the more complete will be its justification.

IV. THE BASIS OF THE DIVINE FRIENDSHIP

The basis of any true friendship is threefold: mutual self-revelation and answering

trust, mutual self-surrender, and some deep community of interests.

In the first place, in order to any genuine friendship there must be *mutual self-revelation and answering trust.* Trust implies some personal self-revelation, and there must be trust in both the character and the love of the other. As long as two people are still "on probation" with each other, there can be no real friendship. "Perfect love casteth out fear." In a high and genuine friendship the friends feel no need to "make terms" with each other; and they can trust each other out of sight. "Do you really think that I could doubt her?" the hero of a modern novel replies to an attempt to break down his faith in his friend.

We have sometimes strangely wondered why faith is so prominent in religion, and at times it has even seemed that revelation and faith belonged only in religion; while in fact they are the basis of every real friendship — a mutual self-revelation that makes possible real trust in the character and love of the other. Our relation to God, especially, we have already seen, cannot be an obtrusive one, and there must be, therefore, the more call for faith in the invisible God;

but every friendship is a sphere of revelation and a call for faith, and cannot go on without them. And the Christian's God has made such a revelation of himself in Christ as calls out the most absolute childlike trust.

But Christ not only calls out trust, he trusts us, in that he relies not upon rules, but upon the one great principle of loyal love to himself; in that he has committed into our care the great interests of his kingdom; and in his frequent call to unexplained suffering.

Every real friendship also implies *mutual self-surrender*. Perhaps the best definition we can make of love is the giving of self. What we ask from our friends is not things finally nor some kind of treatment, but themselves. It is evident that real self-surrender to another presupposes trust. We cannot absolutely submit without absolute trust, and the trust depends on a preceding revelation. In any personal relation, too, it is plain that the depth of the friendship depends upon the completeness with which the selves are given, and the significance of the friendship depends upon the richness of the selves given. On the one hand, we may almost make a graduated scale of our friendships according to the degree in which we give ourselves in them; in the

closest friendships there is the completest surrender. On the other hand, if the friendship is to have large significance, the selves given must be of large worth. It is just here that love itself demands the duty of growth, of self-improvement, and checks the false self-sacrifice that makes one unable to meet the later needs of his friends. At the same time, in our highest human friendships we are perfectly conscious that the self-surrender demanded, though real enough, is "not a weakening denial of self, but a strengthening affirmation of self."[1] We know that every great friendship, though it calls imperatively for self-surrender, is still an enlargement of life, that here in very truth we find ourselves as we lose ourselves.

Now, when we come to apply this condition of self-surrender to our relation to God, plainly we must say, this is no demand peculiar to God. In the proportion in which the friendship is complete, *we* make exactly the same demand and must. There is no friendship without mutual self-surrender. Just as clearly, also, must we say, this is no arbitrary demand on the part of God. As in every friendship, God can give himself

[1] Ritschl, *Unterricht in der Christlichen Religion*, Fourth Ed., p. 11.

to us only in that measure in which we give ourselves to him. He asks for complete self-surrender of ourselves to him, only that he may be able to give himself completely to us. It is passing strange that the terms, which we use without misgiving and even with joy in our human relations, have so different and hard a sound in relation to God—self-surrender, self-giving, self-denial, complete devotement; but they are the one way to the largest and richest life, in the one relation as in the other.

Two opposite instincts exist in men—self-devotion and the insatiate thirst for love; and there is only one relation in which both may be absolutely unchecked. There are necessary limitations in every human relationship—limits in our self-revelation, limits in our submission, limits in our devotion, limits in satisfying response. "I would rather be broken by you than caressed by another," a modern heroine is made to say to the hero; but we may not say that to any human being. In much we are and must be alone. There is only one relation in which we can give ourselves unstintedly, only one relation capable of wholly satisfying. "Only God can satisfy the longings of an immortal soul, that as

the heart was made for him, so he only can fill it."

The third element in the basis of any true friendship is *some deep community of interests.* If there has been full revelation and self-surrender, the community of interests in essentials follows, as of course. Otherwise there could not be real mutual understanding. No friendship can come to its highest where there is not agreement as to the great aims, ideals, and purposes of life. That is a poverty-stricken friendship, indeed, in which there is no sympathy in the highest moments, in which at your best you must leave the other out. Paul's "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," thus, is intended as no limiting counsel. He would only say: Do not provide for yourselves the intensest pain, of finding in all your highest moments those shut out who stand in the closest life relation to you. The truest friends must be able to say: The interests which are supreme for you are supreme for me.

And just such a deep community of interests must there be in our relation to God. Our mastering interests must be the same as Christ's. We must really share God's life of self-giving love. And in the joy of the abso-

lute trust called out by the perfect revelation in Christ, and of complete self-surrender, say: The interests which are supreme for Thee shall be supreme for me. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

V. THE CONDITIONS FOR DEEPENING THE FRIENDSHIP

With this basis assumed, what, in briefest summary, are the conditions for deepening a friendship? Just these, if we can find them, are the conditions for a continually deepening Christian life. From the beginning one needs to remember that no natural friendship is a work of conscious arrangement, but rather an unconscious growth. In no personal relation is it wholesome to seek experiences as such. The highest enjoyments and most valuable gifts of friendship come incidentally, rather than as consciously sought.

First of all then, in every personal relation, upon the basis of a well-grounded trust, let one assure himself of the meaning of the friendship, but *not expect continuous emotion.* Neither our physical nor our mental constitutions admit it. And no acquaintance will stand constant introspection. We are

simply to fulfil the conditions of a growing friendship, and count upon the results.

The second great condition is *association*. This is fundamental, and may be taken as almost summing up all. Friendship is not the product of certain rules, but of much association. You wake up after a time with a kind of surprise to find how much the friendship means. And this is the one great essential for a deepening friendship with God. We are to stay in the presence of Christ, to give him a chance at us, by attention, by thought, by taking his point of view and studying his thought, by getting into touch with his feeling and his purpose—living in his atmosphere. We can be sure of the effects in character and friendship. "To me to live is Christ."

The third condition is *time*, and is really involved in association. Time is necessary to grow into any great thing. No acquaintance can become deep without time; any friendship will grow cold to which no time is given. This giving of time is the practical giving of self, as observation of the way in which friends drift apart will show. The emphasis laid on the daily use of the Bible and prayer ought to be regarded as really only a rational

recognition of the need that some real place must be given to the divine friendship, if it is to grow. Here, too, belongs the recognition of the great significance of occasional longer times together, in deepening a friendship.

Another condition of any deepening friendship is *expression*. The psychological law is unmistakable. Consciousness is naturally impulsive; every idea tends to pass into act. Only through expression does any psychical state get its full significance. And, on the other hand, that which is not expressed dies. If then any friendship is to grow, it must get expression; by word, especially by seeking to please in little things, by manifestation of gratitude, by sympathy in the joy of your friend—one of the most difficult attainments, by sharing in a great work, by sharing of sorrow and sacrifice—not only in willingness to share the sorrows of your friend, but in sharing yours with him. It is mistaken kindness to shut your friend out of your deepest experiences, even when those experiences are painful. These painful experiences are often peculiarly the times of the revelation of our friends and of God. In any true human friendship we are glad to show by sacrifice the reality of our love. And Christ honors

us by calling us to these varied expressions of our love, and by sharing with us his own cup and his own baptism. That expression is most perfect that enters most fully into God's own redeeming activity. "Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice."

A further and most important condition of any deepening friendship is a *sacred respect for the personality* of the other. One's sense of the sacredness of a person is a pretty accurate measure of his own highest growth. A true friend never demands; he never overrides; he asks only. There are limitations to all intimacies. Every soul must in much be alone, and ought to be. One only degrades his friendships when he measures them by the number of liberties he takes, the number of privacies he rides over rough-shod. Any deep self-revelation can be made only to the reverent.

And God marvelously respects our freedom. He knocks only; he does not force the door. He never overrides our freedom in an obtrusive relation. And for the same reason, he does not step in continually to set things right. This is no play world, and our characters are our own. And upon our part

there may be no approach to dictation to God as to the time, or manner, or method of his revelation. His best revelation, too, can be made only to the deeply reverent. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

In every deepening friendship, too, one must be *real*. The condition is imperative. We are to be real only, always; there are to be no false assertions, no forced feelings. We are not to start or to continue on a false basis. There is to be no pretense anywhere, for it saps all reality in the relation with God or man. Our prayers are to be, first of all, honest, our confessions honest, our witness honest, our profession honest. We are to be real.

Breaking off our comparison in the midst, and leaving almost untouched the explicit treatment of one of the most important and interesting of its applications—that of the effect of sin upon personal relations, let us raise, in closing the chapter, the question of the beginning: Have we given anything like due weight to Christ's thought of religion as a personal relation to God? Have we recognized the constantly growing light that this conception, simple as it seems, has to shed on all our Christian living and thinking?

CHAPTER XII

THEOLOGY IN TERMS OF PERSONAL RELATION

If it is true, as Professor Clarke says, that "religion is the reality of which theology is the study," and if religion is a personal relation of man to God, then it would seem that an adequate theology must be stated in personal terms. The writer cannot doubt that religion is best conceived as a personal relation, as the last chapter has tried to show; and he certainly holds that theology is best defined as simply a thoughtful and unified expression of what religion means to us. He is bound, therefore, to affirm that theology must be stated in terms of personal relation. This conception, which the ninth chapter has already indicated as the true goal of theological reconstruction, the present chapter, bringing together some of the lines of the previous discussion, undertakes definitely to defend and partially to illustrate. The illustration is confined to the presentation of a few points in the conception of Christ.

I. THEOLOGY MUST BE STATED IN PERSONAL TERMS

The very name, Christian, which we take upon us, as best characterizing what seems to us most essential in the spirit which we are to show, implies that we know that all life is changed for us by a single personal relation. To trace out in all its implications the full significance of that relation for our entire being is the sole business of theology.

Some recognition of this intensely personal nature of the themes of theology, doubtless, there has always been; but theology has not been able to avoid the great common danger of all speculative thinking — the danger of abstraction — and has, consequently, too often lost quite out of sight the rich concrete personal relations in a maze of metaphysical abstractions. It is well worth while, therefore, consciously and of set purpose to attempt a statement of theology in strictly personal terms — to demand of ourselves that we keep constantly in mind the meaning of personal relations.

This would only be carrying out what is fairly involved in the demand which Dr. Fairchild laid upon himself in the preface to his *Elements of Theology:* "The controlling thought

in the mind of the author, the organic principle in the system of doctrine presented, is the recognition of the distinct and complete personality of God, and a like personality of man."[1] Very likely many readers of that preface saw little in this sentence, and said to themselves: Is that not what every theologian does as a matter of course? Unfortunately it is not. Indeed, the trend in theology towards impersonal forms of statement has been so strong that, even for a man who felt earnestly the personal nature of the problems, a thoroughly consistent statement of theological doctrines in personal terms has been exceedingly difficult. Professor Clarke, for example, in his deservedly popular *Outline of Christian Theology*, when dealing with the heart of the Christian faith, similarly says: "The intensely personal nature of this reconciliation has not here been overstated, —scarcely, indeed, can it be represented in too strong a light. . . . The reconciliation is not a matter of relation to law or government; it is primarily and essentially a matter of the relation between persons, God and men. . . . It is the personal relation that needs to be set right, and it is through being

[1] *Elements of Theology*, p. iv.

right with God that men are to be made right with the government of God."[1] And Herrmann, even more comprehensively and concisely, says: "In its commencement and in all its development alike, Christian faith is nothing else than trust in persons and in the powers of personal life."[2] One may believe thoroughly in these statements of Clarke and Herrmann, and regard them as, no doubt, forming a kind of ideal for both men, and yet question whether either always keeps entirely true to his personal conception of the theological problem.

Any one, indeed, who has himself passed through a transition in his conception of theological problems, and who lives in a generation so distinctly transitional as this generation has been, must find it difficult to avoid the transitional in his forms of statement, or even of conception; and, in spite of himself, he will repeatedly fall back into what is really inconsistent with his highest point of view. But if, as many things seem to indicate, we are on the eve of a new constructive period in theology, which shall organize, even more completely than any of the admirable state-

[1] *An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 322.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 178.

ments already made, the different lines of progress of our time, can we not be sure that the dominant word in that new construction will be—not evolution, not historical, not critical, not social, not ethical even, but broader than any one of these and including all—personal?

Many considerations certainly urge us to such an attempt at a strictly personal interpretation of theological problems.

1. In the first place, the very fact, assumed at the start, that religion is a personal relation of man to God, at once provokes such an attempt. We cannot help feeling that if we could justly conceive that personal relation, we should be far on the road to the solution of all our questions in theology. An approach to such a conception the last chapter has attempted. And, certainly, if the statements of that chapter concerning our personal relation to God are to be given weight, it is evident that any theology that really meets the facts must be saturated with a deep sense of the meaning of the personal.

2. Moreover, if one chose to start from the metaphysical side, he is confronted, as never before, with three facts which show that our ultimate philosophical solutions are every-

where tending to the personal: First, the collapse of materialism; second, the predominance of idealistic or spiritualistic views in philosophy; third, the growing acceptance of the teleological view of essence. It is no accidental result that, within our own time, materialism has ceased to exist as a philosophical theory. On all hands, moreover, it seems to be increasingly recognized that, if we are ever to understand the world, the key must be, as Leibnitz thought it, in ourselves. Accordingly, in spite of the vast increase in our knowledge of the material universe, our philosophies are more and more idealistic or spiritualistic, holding either that only minds exist, or that all that does exist is of the nature of mind. Both views assert alike that at least we know best and most directly spirit; and both seem likely to come to affirm, with Paulsen, that here, in our own inner life, we know the essence of reality, and that "the distinction made between a phenomenon and a thing in itself has absolutely no meaning here."[1] All this means that, ultimately, all relations are personal, or in the line of the personal.

So, too, the growing tendency to define essence (in the sense of that which distin-

[1] *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 366.

guishes one being from another, not that which is common to all beings) in terms of purpose, is a distinct tendency towards definition in personal terms. The recognition that we can speak of the essential quality of a thing only in view of the purpose we cherish concerning it, is becoming well-nigh universal among philosophical writers. What one will call the essential quality of paper, for example, depends upon the use he wishes to make of it. Ultimately, this teleological view of essence must bring us to a new metaphysics, in which the real essence of each thing must be defined in terms of the full divine purpose in bringing this thing into being. All that God meant it to be, the full part which he meant it to play—that is the only adequate definition of the essence of anything. And this teleological view of essence, now rightly prevailing in philosophy, has a significance for theology which we are but slowly recognizing.

Even a true metaphysics then, seems, ultimately, everywhere to drive us to attempt a theology in personal terms.

3. But if this present distinct trend in philosophy towards the personal is justified it gives a new reason for believing, what was previously asserted, that we know spirit, per-

sonal life, better than anything else; that, for our generation at least, personal relations are really clearer than any of the analogies from other things by which we have tried to make them clear. And from whatever realm we draw those analogies—whether from human institutions or from the evolution of lower nature—we can know beforehand that the analogies must prove insufficient and in part misleading. The personal reality is greater than any of its illustrations. Many have come to see that this is true of all legal and governmental analogies, who do not see that it is just as true of evolution analogies. But our discussion of evolution convinced us that any adequate view of evolution must include man, and that with man we have reached the stage of persons and personal relations, and the dominant laws must be those of personal relation, not those of the lower animal evolution. The analogy of the organism, therefore, as well as the analogy from human institutions, is certain to fail us at the most vital points. *The first and foremost, the constant, the last, and the greatest study of the theologian must be of persons and of personal relations;* nothing else will avail him in his deepest problems. And if he will really face the facts, he will

come to see that the personal lies closer at hand, is more real and more clear to him, than anything else.

4. It is quite in harmony with the philosophical trend and the new clearness of the personal, that we should believe that we can see, what earlier chapters have pointed out, that, in the main, the development of the race has been steadily toward a deeper sense of the value and sacredness of the person; that every step in moral advance has meant a deepening of this sense; and that the highest test of a civilization or of a man is to be found in this same sense of the value and the sacredness of the person. This sensitiveness as to the personal, in spite of some annoying counter-currents, seems, beyond doubt, stronger in our age than ever before. And we have already seen that all the distinctly moral and spiritual influences of our day on theology may be grouped under the two heads of this deepening sense of the value and sacredness of the person, and the growing recognition of Christ as the supreme person of history. Certain it is, that what have been indicated as the modern emphases in theology — Christian, biblical, historical, practical, ethical, social—all expressly call for

a deepening of the conception of the personal. Now, let one take in, even superficially, the significance of these statements, here only epitomized from our previous discussion, and he must feel that no theology can meet the needs of our time, or the demands of truth, which does not insist on bringing every problem up to its ultimate solution in personal terms.

5. We are brought to the same inference when we recall one of the great contentions of modern psychology—its insistence on the unity of man, already emphasized. The whole man, it maintains, acts in all. Again and again in the history of man has it been necessary to renew this protest in the interests of the whole man, against the abstractions and one-sidedness of a "false psychologism." The warning is needed in theology. Even thought, emotion, and will cannot be adequately treated in abstraction from each other. I quite agree with Mellone, that it should be a fundamental contention in philosophy that "no one of these three can be opposed to the others; human existence or experiences cannot be interpreted in terms of one of these unless the others are made of equal importance with that one. . . . We do not correct 'intel-

lectualism' by opposing emotion and will to thought — assuming that reality is found in them *more* than in thought, and that we are before all things active and feeling beings; nor by regarding our nature as a mere combination of the three, as a rope may be of three strands; but by regarding even our deepest knowledge of these three (in their distinction and relation) as itself only symbolic and partially true; so that the three functions become three *inseparable* and equally complete symbols of what man verily is."[1] And if we take real account thus of the entire man we get a double, not a single, test of truth — logical consistency, *and* worth. Reality must meet the test of the whole man. The point now to be noted is, that this psychological and philosophical insistence upon the entire personality leads us directly to our main thesis in theology. "The whole man, in the entirety of his being," it has been profoundly said, "is the organ of the spiritual;"[2] and the whole man, the entire personality, comes out, as nowhere else, in personal relations.

6. But, to come still more closely to our question, let us note that the whole problem

[1] *Philosophical Criticism and Construction*, pp. x, xii.

[2] Newman Smyth, *The Religious Feeling*, p. 142.

of life, of morals and of religion is ultimately for us all a problem of the fulfilment of personal relations, human and divine. It is the problem simply of bringing the child—man—to a genuine sharing of the life of the Father, to the choice of a character and joy like the Father's; that is, finally, the problem of learning to live the life of love, as complete and all-inclusive. This means that the problem of character is necessarily social. It cannot be individualistic merely, even if it would. We cannot learn to love in a vacuum. The perfection of individual character is love. And love necessarily involves others. We learn to love by loving. The Kingdom of God is within, indeed—the reign of God, who is love, in the individual heart. But this reign of love in the individual is manifestly impossible without recognition everywhere of relations to others. Love *is* the giving of self in personal relations. The Kingdom of God, therefore, is, necessarily, social—not personal and social, but social because personal. A so-called "social theology," then, has simply adequately to conceive its problems in strictly personal terms. We are not likely, even in this generation, to over-emphasize the significance of the proposition: "We are members

one of another." But we ought to see that that is not something *added* to the personal, but rather absolutely necessary to any possible conception of the personal and of personal relations. To deny that proposition is to make impossible any moral world at all. The social emphasis of our generation, therefore, does not lead to some quite new kind of theology, any more than its evolutionary emphasis; it only leads to a more perfect conception of the personal.

7. And finally, this insistence upon personal terms in theology seems to the writer to be only a return to the great dominant New Testament conception. It is amazing that we have been able so long to believe that the forensic in any form is predominant in the New Testament writers. Many analogies of all sorts are used—the forensic among others—to bring home the meaning of Christ's life and death. But I believe that, even among illustrations, it can be shown that the legal does not lead. Certainly, it ought to give us cause for serious thought, that Christ himself nowhere uses even a forensic analogy as to the results of his death; and positively, on the other hand, does make everything depend on personal relation to himself. While in the

case of Paul, if due weight is given even to his single phrase, "in Christ," it must be granted that the personal relation is clearly the dominant conception in his thinking, in spite of his rabbinical training. The great trouble is, that we have made far more of a few selected scattered illustrations of Paul in his theoretical reasoning, than we have of his multitudinous statements of personal relations in his account of Christian experience. But no attempt can be made here to enter upon the treatment of this phase of the subject.

It may well be added that, in our discussion of the critical study of Scripture, we found ourselves everywhere driven to essentially personal conceptions of God's relations to men, in order to keep the revelation moral and spiritual at all.

I hold, then, that an adequate Christian theology must be stated in personal terms, because the very word "Christian" implies it; because of the growing recognition among theologians of this point of view; because religion is itself personal relation to God; because the philosophic trend is distinctly personal; because the moral and spiritual characteristics of our time show that the personal has a new clearness for us and far greater

recognition; because of the psychological emphasis on the entire man; because the whole problem of life is ultimately the problem of the fulfilment of personal relations; and because this personal conception lies closest to Christ's own thought and to the directest reflections of it in the New Testament. Let us not shrink back from a thoroughgoing attempt to state our entire theology in strict terms of personal relation.

II. THE PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO THE CONCEPTION OF CHRIST

As it is distinctly held by the writer that the attempt to state theology in personal terms is not a wholly new one, but rather that the great need is that the attempt be made more conscious, more thorough, and more consistent, it is the more possible, in concluding our discussion, to illustrate, with reasonable brevity, the partial application of the principle to a single doctrine—the doctrine of Christ, though other applications are not less important.

As Christians, we start with Christ, our supreme datum. He is our supreme datum because he is the supreme fact of history,

and he is the supreme fact of history because he is the supreme person of history. There can be no adequate philosophy that leaves out the greatest fact. So doing, we have thrown away the key at the start.

Christ, however, according to his own conception, it is worth saying, is primarily a revelation of a person — not of truth. He is, he believed, God's own supreme self-revelation. And his great value for us, as that of all revelation, is found, not in the fact that he brings us more truths, but that he puts us into personal touch with God himself. In the very meaning of his being he is a revealer of a person.

But only a person can fully reveal a person. If God's personality is granted to be real, and yet in any sense transcendent, any adequate revelation of God must be through a person. Moreover, the revelation that, above all else, we need of God is the revelation of his character, and character cannot be merely told; it must be shown, and it can be shown in reality only in the moral activities of a person. And this revelation of God's character, too, must be in a sphere we can wholly understand and judge, and therefore human in human relations — a human person. That is, Christ must

be human that he may be divine. He must really show in his own life the ideal personal relation to God and to men, in order really to reveal God in his character of love. God must therefore manifest himself as man, in a person whose character we can transfer, feature by feature, to God without any sense of defect.

Or, to look at the matter from another point of view, the only redemptive force we know comes through trust in a person. The revelation of God, therefore, if it is to be redemptive, must be through a person, and through a person who can call out absolute trust. We know but one person in history who can call out that trust. We shall make no mistake in saying, he is the supreme self-revelation of God.

But to see that Christ is in his very being a personal revelation of God, is to put our whole thought of his significance and uniqueness in a somewhat different light.

It is noteworthy that those considerations which weigh most with us to-day, in the statement of his uniqueness, are all in the realm of the personal rather than the metaphysical. They do not, of course, exclude metaphysical questions, properly conceived; but they are

not primarily metaphysical at all. That is, when we try to face directly the questions: Who is Jesus Christ? what does he mean? how does he reveal God? we find ourselves instinctively led to a series of propositions, as a basis of our belief in his real divinity, all of which concern his character and personal relations. For myself, at least, the propositions which best set forth the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ are such as these:

1. He is the greatest in the greatest sphere —that of the moral and spiritual, speaking with an authority here which no other can pretend to approach; "transcendent among founders of religion," as Fairbairn puts it, "and to be transcendent here is to be transcendent everywhere."[1]

2. He is alone the Sinless One; alone among the righteous, in Bushnell's phrasing, of "impenitent piety."[2]

3. More than this, with the highest moral ideal conceivable by men, he consciously rises always to his own ideal, and, in the words of Herrmann, "compels us to admit that he does rise to it."[3]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 378.
[2] *The Character of Jesus*, p. 17 ff.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

4. Still further, Jesus has such a character that we can transfer it directly to God, and ask, and need to ask, nothing further. Fairbairn's language seems literally true: "He was the first being who had realized for man the idea of the Divine."[1] He who had seen him had seen the Father.

5. Nor is this all. Jesus has also conscious ability to redeem all other men. As another puts it: "Jesus knows no more sacred task than to point men to his own person." He is himself the one great Redeemer.

6. This simply implies, as Denison has pointed out,[2] such a God-consciousness and such sense of mission as would make any other brain the world has ever seen topple into insanity, but only keeps him sweet, normal, rational, living the most wholesome of all human lives.

7. In consequence of all this, he is in fact the only person in the history of the race who can call out absolute trust, and in whom God certainly finds us.

8. He is, thus, for us the Ideal realized, from whom we would take nothing away, to whom we can conceive nothing to be added.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 7.
[2] *The New World*, September, 1898, p. 554.

Now it is upon such a series of propositions that I base my confession of the divinity of Jesus Christ; or rather, it is *in* such propositions that I do confess his divinity. But such statements obviously cannot be received in the abstract, upon mere authority, or as result of mere will. They are not philosophical propositions. They must be the outcome of a man's own personal experience of Jesus Christ. The only valuable confession of the divinity of Christ must follow his own work upon us, not precede it as a condition. In this respect, then, I am in thorough agreement with Herrmann, and should expect every candid Christian to be, when he says: "This thought, that, when the historical Christ takes such hold of us, we have to do with God himself—this thought is certainly the most important element in the confession of the Deity of Christ for any one whom he has redeemed."[1] An adequate confession of the divinity of Christ, that is, must emphasize the fact of his personal revelation of God, for the greatest denial of his divinity must certainly be, not inability to receive certain metaphysical statements about his essence or substance, however time-honored these statements, but the fact that a man

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 112.

does not find God in Christ; that without sense of contradiction he can leave Christ outside in his highest religious experiences of communion with God; that he cannot think of Christ as an eternally satisfying revelation of God. Contrast with such a denial the robust confession of Christ's divinity, implied in the words of Dr. Behrends, which I suspect many a theologian who would criticise Dr. Behrends' conception of Christ as quite heretical could not make: "The vision of his face is the only vision I ever expect to have of God, as Philip saw in him the Father."

Let us candidly ask ourselves whether we have not really been laying the emphasis on quite the wrong point, in our painful endeavors to decide whether another man admitted the divinity of Christ. Is there no better test of a man's belief in the Deity of Christ, than whether he can see his way clear to the metaphysical proposition that Christ is of one essence with the Father? *Can* that be the best test, and Christianity be the religion it is? Let us disabuse our minds for a moment of the thought that Herrmann is a Ritschlian heretic, and ask if he is not strictly correct, at least, in this statement: "The question

whether we are right in speaking of the Deity of Christ, when we have found God turning toward us in the disclosure of Jesus' personal life, must be decided according as we conceive God to be in his nature a substance on the one hand, or on the other a Personal Spirit who asserts his nature by the energy of a will directing itself toward certain ends and preserving in itself a certain disposition. If we choose the former conception of God, then, certainly, the proposition that there is divine substance in Christ will be chosen as the proper expression of belief in his Deity; but if, on the contrary, the latter conception be followed, which is clearly the only one represented in the sacred Scriptures, and the only one permissible in the Christian community, then it is self-evident that the Deity of Christ can only be expressed by saying that the mind and will of the everlasting God stand before us in the historically active will of this man."[1] In all fairness, let us ask, Is this last an inadequate confession of the divinity of Christ?

I should myself, indeed, add to Herrmann's statement the consideration that, with the teleological view of essence or substance

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

which we have found philosophy asserting, a true metaphysical view of the being of Christ could be stated only in terms of the personal purpose of God concerning him; and, since we find the very meaning of the life of Christ in the fact that God is making his supreme self-revelation through him, God's purpose concerning Christ was absolutely unique, and we can say, in strict metaphysical terms, that Christ is of one essence with the Father. Christ is, thus, not only morally and spiritually at one with God, and so absolutely unique in his perfect response to the will of God, but also may be said to be metaphysically at one with God, when essence is interpreted teleologically. The newer and the older, the personal and the metaphysical, forms of statement would thus fall together; but there can be no doubt that the personal and practical form of the confession of Christ's divinity is, for the vast majority of men, much the more rational and surer test.

When we turn for a moment from the person of Christ to the work of Christ, we find the same emphasis upon the personal needed. His main work in his earthly life was wrought through personal association with a few men. The Kingdom of God, which he came to

found, was a kingdom of persons; and it began in reality when a single man, through personal association with him, had come, dimly at least, to feel what his personality meant and to choose with him. And eternally Christ's work is, through his own personal life, to bring men into complete personal communion with the personal God. An ever-deepening and ever more significant friendship with God in Christ—this is eternal life. And the understanding of that life is the chief business of theology.

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By way of preëminence this era now closing has been an era of criticism and destruction. Nothing has escaped the crucible. Scholars have carried the method of the laboratory into the library, the gallery, the legislative hall, and even into the temples of religion. Old poems, old histories, old science, old creeds, have been pulled to pieces, and studied part by part. With some the analytic spirit has become a frenzy, and the love of dissection a morbid passion. With others analysis has represented a desire to know the exact facts. Now that the wave of criticism has passed by, changes many and great are found to have taken place. Nothing remains as it was. We have a new chemistry, a new pedagogy, a new psychology. And now that the intellect has completed its analytic work, our generation has come to realize that the heart with its hunger is, as before, unappeased. Religion is the life of God in the soul of man. The creed is the outer, verbal photograph of that inner, vital experience. Man's interest in those verbal pictures named creeds, unfortunately, seems waning, while his interest in religion is steadily waxing. As Edmund Burke once said, "Man is by constitution a religious animal."

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